TOKYOPOP
OSSAN IDOL
07
ICHIKA KINO & MOCHIKO MOCHIDA

Ossan Idol, Volume 7

Manga by Ichika Kino

Original story by Mochiko Mochida

Editor - Lena Atanassova
Translator - Katie Kimura
Quality Check - Shingo Nemoto
Proofreader - Massiel Gutierrez
Copyeditor - M. Cara Carper
Editorial Associate - Janae Young
Marketing Associate - Kae Winters
Cover Design - Sol DeLeo
Retouching and Lettering - Vibrraant Publishing Studio
Licensing Specialist - Arika Yanaka
Editor-in-Chief & Publisher - Stu Levy

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TOKYOPOP Inc.
4136 Del Rey Ave., Suite 502
Marina del Rey, CA 90292-5604

E-mail: info@TOKYOPOP.com
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OSSAN 36 GA IDOL NI NARUHANASHI Vol. 7
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First published in Japan in 2022 by Shufu To Seikatsu Sha Co., Ltd.
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EPUB: 978-1-4278-7603-4
MOBI: 978-1-4278-7604-1
PDF: 978-1-4278-7605-8

OSSAN IDOL 07

MANGA ◆ ICHIKA KINO
ORIGINAL STORY ◆
MOCHIKO MOCHIDA
CHARACTER DESIGN ◆
MIZUKI SAKAKIBARA

STORY

MIROKU, A 270 LB UNEMPLOYED SHUT-IN, WAS SPURRED ON BY THE POPULARITY OF HIS "LET'S TRY DANCING" VIDEO, JOINED A GYM, GOT IN SHAPE, AND TRANSFORMED INTO A MIDDLE-AGED HUNK IN NO TIME! ALONG WITH YOICHI AND SHIJU, HE CAUGHT THE EYE OF A FAMOUS PRODUCER, MR. LAVENDER, AND THE THREE MEN SUCCESSFULLY DEBUTED AS MIYOSHI! MIYOSHI IS SLOWLY BUT STEADILY LEVELING UP AS A GROUP. WHAT WILL THEIR NEXT GIG BE?!

CHARACTERS

MIROKU (36)

UNEMPLOYED・SHUT-IN・VIRGIN
INTERNET ADDICT・WEIGHS 270 LBS ・GIVES OFF PHEROMONES UNCONSCIOUSLY・LIKES FUMI

HE PRESSED "UPLOAD" BY MISTAKE AND HIS "LET'S DANCE" VIDEO WENT VIRAL!

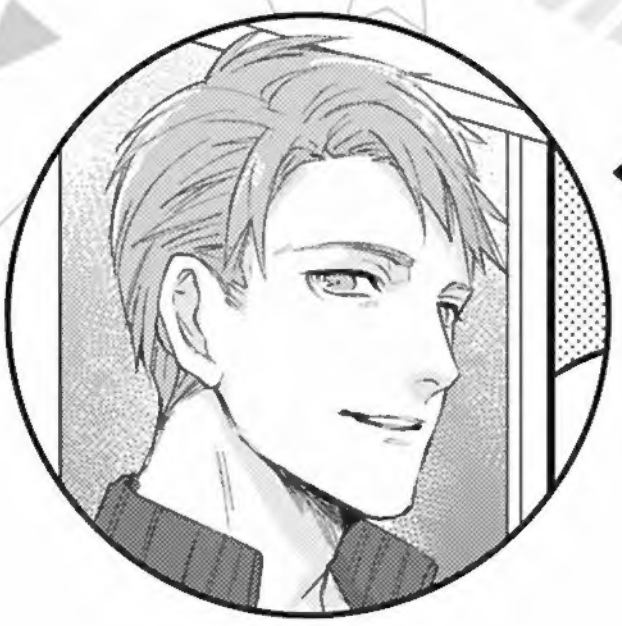
MIROKU OSAKI

FUMI

FUMI KISARAGI

YOICHI'S BUBBLY NIECE WHO WORKS AT HIS OFFICE. SHE ALWAYS PUTS HER ALL INTO HER WORK.

FUMI'S HERO, THE MAN WHO SAVED HER FROM A TROUBLESOME CUSTOMER, WAS ACTUALLY MIROKU BACK WHEN HE WAS CHUBBY!



YOICHI (41)

YOICHI KISARAGI

HE WAS OVER 300 LBS, BUT NOW YOICHI IS THE CEO OF A SMALL ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY. HE AND MIROKU MET AT THE GYM. USED TO BE AN IDOL FOR THE SHINEEZ TALENT AGENCY.

SHIJU (40)

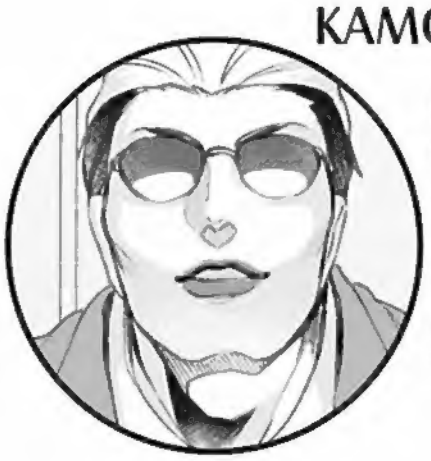
SHIJU ONOHARA

A FORMER DANCER AND HOST, NOW UNEMPLOYED AND LEADING A LIFE ON THE EDGE. HE WAS THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED THAT MIROKU TAKE PART IN THE DANCE COMPETITION, AND HE USED TO BELONG TO A LEGENDARY DANCE TEAM.

NINA OSAKI

MIROKU'S LITTLE SISTER AND AN ASSISTANT HAIRSTYLIST. SHE GOT CLOSE TO SHIJU AFTER GIVING HIM VOICE LESSONS.

KAMO LAVENDER



PRODUCER EXTRAORDINAIRE OF NATIONALLY TREASURED IDOL GROUPS SUCH AS UGUISUDANI SEVEN.

VICE-PRESIDENT (VP)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE MAJOR IDOL TALENT AGENCY SHINEEZ. HE VIEWS MIYOSHI AS AN ENEMY.

MIHACHI OSAKI

MIROKU'S OLDER SISTER WHO WAS YOICHI'S BIGGEST FAN IN HIS IDOL DAYS AND LOVES HIM EVEN NOW.

OSSAN IDOL

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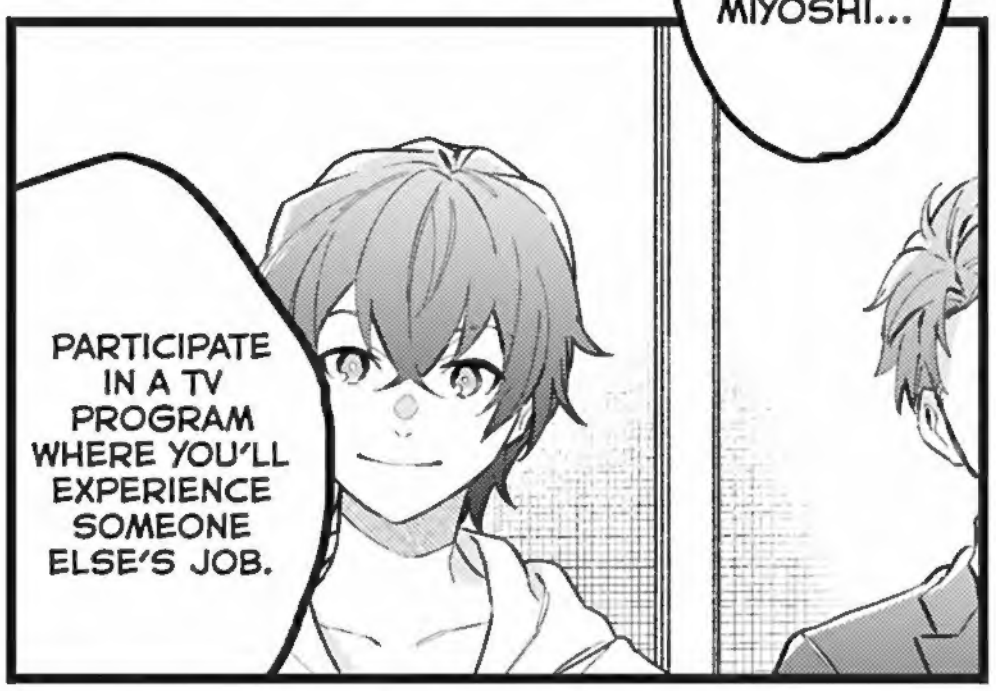
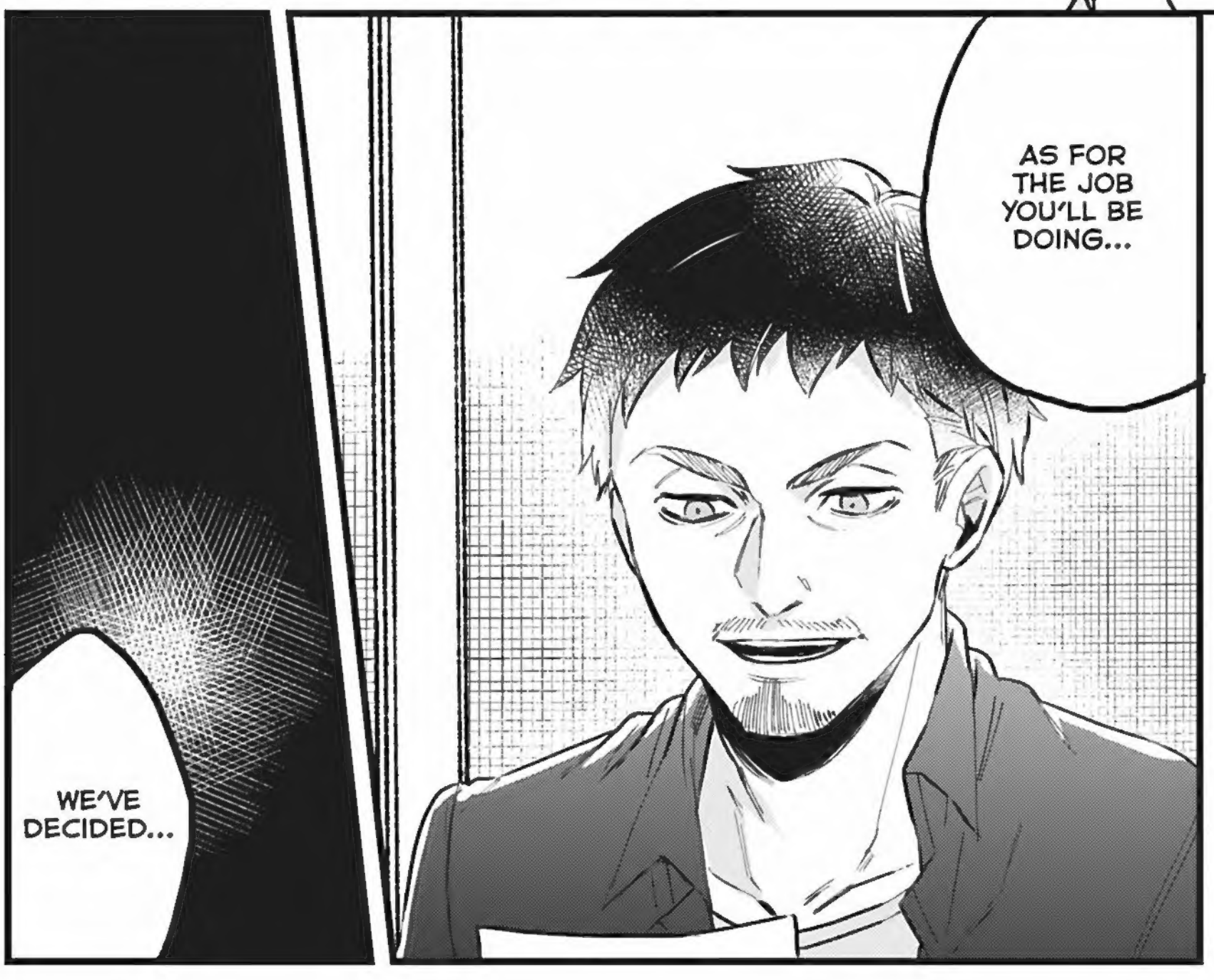
Chapter 39

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE MIYOSHI...


PARTICIPATE IN A TV PROGRAM WHERE YOU'LL EXPERIENCE SOMEONE ELSE'S JOB.

ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN OUR PLANS FOR THIS PROJECT.


AS FOR THE JOB YOU'LL BE DOING...
WE'VE DECIDED...

CHAMPAGNE!

CHAMPAGNE!

...TO MAKE YOU HOSTS.

SQUEAL

WOW!

SPARKLE

SPARKLE

WE WANT YOU TO CHARM THE AUDIENCE IN WAYS YOU DON'T USUALLY GET TO ATTEMPT.

I SEE...?

HOSTS?

YES!

SHIJU, YOU CAN JUST DO WHAT YOU ALWAYS DO.

UH, IT'S NOT LIKE I'M STILL A HOST NOW, YOU KNOW.

HOWEVER, UM... WE HAVE A FORMER HOST IN OUR GROUP.

FORMER HOST

AS IDOLS, I DON'T THINK...

IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR US TO GO TO A HOST CLUB AND HAVE WOMEN SPEND MONEY ON US.

I'VE HEARD THAT YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THEM.

I DISCUSSED THAT WITH YOUR MANAGER AND WAS ABLE TO GET SOME ACTORS THROUGH YOUR AGENCY.

ACTORS FROM OUR AGENCY?

NOT BAD, I SAY.

W-WELL, IF IT'S FOR WORK...

PEOPLE WE'RE FAMILIAR WITH?

YES!

THEN I'LL SEE YOU ON THE DAY OF THE FILMING.

THE DAY OF
THE FILMING

BAM

BAM

SUPER
OTIATE

BA-BAM

WOW, YOU THREE LOOK LIKE YOU'VE GOTTEN SUPER INTO YOUR ROLES!

WE'LL BE FILMING EACH OF YOU SEPARATELY, STARTING WITH SHIJU.

PLEASE SHOW US HOW IT'S DONE!

LIKE I SAID, I'M NOT A HOST ANYMORE.

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THIS'LL BE MY FIRST TIME SEEING SHIJU ACT LIKE A HOST.

I'M SO EXCITED!

HMM... THEN I GUESS I'LL LAY IT ON THICK TO GIVE YOU A SHOW.

EXCUSE ME! SORRY WE'RE LATE.

EXCITED

OH! IT LOOKS LIKE THE LADIES HAVE FINISHED GETTING READY.

!

BA-BAM

NICE TO MEET YOU! ♡

WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU TODAY.

?

I'M ISONYA. PLEASE DON'T TOUCH ME.

...

I'M LAVENDERIA.

I'M TAPICOCO! ♡

WAIT, WAIT, WAIT!

NOW THAT THE LADIES ARE HERE, WE CAN BEGIN FILMING.

HUH?

UMMMM, THERE ISN'T A SINGLE LADY IN THAT GROUP AT ALL!

I DEMAND A RECAST!

THIS IS FRAUD!

IT SUCKS, BUT HE'S RIGHT...

NOW, LET'S BEGIN.

OF COURSE THERE ISN'T. YOUR FANS WOULD REACH FOR THEIR PITCHFORKS IF WE USED REAL WOMEN IN THE SHOW, EVEN IF THEY DID GO THROUGH YOUR TALENT AGENCY.

EXCUSE ME.

STEP

MAY I SIT NEXT TO YOU?

I'M SHIJU.

SURE, DUDE! I MEAN...

YES!

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

HUH?! UM... I'M T-TAPICOCO. ♡

IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU.

EEK!

TAPICOCO, HUH? CAN I CALL YOU BY THAT?

PLEASE DO!

ず…

LEAN

DO YOU NOT WANT ME TO?

TAPICOCO, IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME IN THIS KIND OF CLUB?

HUH? UM... YES, I SUPPOSE.

O-OKAY.

THANKS. WELL, LET'S GET SOMETHING TO DRINK.

I AM TAPICOCO, NOT TAPIOCA.

EH?

SO THAT'S WHY.

HOW MUCH YOU'RE BLUSHING.

IT'S JUST SO CUTE...

?!

HEY...

HUH?

IT'S LOUD IN HERE. LET'S GO SOMEWHERE WE CAN CHAT IN PEACE.

MAYBE SOMEWHERE WE CAN BE... ALONE?

TIME'S UP, HUH?

THAT WAS FAST.

Time to switch!

EH?

I...

I WILL! ♡

CALL FOR ME ANY TIME, TAPICOCO.

"I WILL! ♡"?

WHAT THE HELL WAS I THINKING?!

SHIJU REALLY IS AMAZING!

IT'LL BE HARD TO TOP SOMEONE WITH ACTUAL EXPERIENCE.

AN ADMIRING GAZE

THIS IS TERRIFYING!

FOR A SECOND, I COMPLETELY FORGOT THAT I'M A MAN!

TV CREW SHOCKED INTO SILENCE BY HOW COMFORTABLE SHIJU SEEMED IN THE SETTING...

さわさわ... MURMUR

DON'T ASK ME. I HAVE NO CLUE.

SO... WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THIS ATMOSPHERE?

MURMUR ざわ...

I WAS AMAZED BY HIS COSTUME.

HE REALLY LOOKED LIKE A WOMAN.

SORRY, TAPIOCA...

FOR STARTERS, IT SEEMS LIKE SHIJU'S SHOT IS A WRAP.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT!

HE'S A SUPER POPULAR COSPLAYER, YOU KNOW.

AT THE PRICE OF TAPIOCA'S SANITY, THOUGH.

SHIJU GAVE US A GOOD EXAMPLE, BUT I'M STILL NERVOUS.

JUST DO YOUR BEST, YOICHI!

WE'RE READY TO ROLL AGAIN. YOU'RE UP NEXT, YOICHI.

ME?

?!

PLEASE DON'T PRESSURE ME RIGHT BEFORE MY TURN!

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING HOW WILD YOU CAN BE AS A HOST!

I'LL BE FINE.

I LEARNED SOME THINGS FROM WATCHING SHIJU.

EXCUSE ME.

MAY I SIT NEXT TO YOU?

FREEZE

NO, THANK YOU.

AH...

HA HA...!

THINGS TOOK AN UNEXPECTED TURN RIGHT OFF THE BAT!

ARE YOU THIRSTY?

WANT SOMETHING TO DRINK?

ALL RIGHT. I'LL JUST HAVE TO BE A LITTLE HEAVY-HANDED.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING CHEAP AND SMOOTH, MAYBE THIS OR THIS?

...I'LL HAVE WHATEVER'S CHEAPEST.

ALL RIGHT.

I HAVE TO ACT MORE LIKE A HOST AND SAY SOMETHING SHIJU MIGHT SAY!

HOLD ON. AT THIS RATE, THE SCENE WILL BE MORE LIKE A DRINKING PARTY THAN A HOST CLUB.

HEY, ISOBE, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

YOU OBVIOUSLY ALREADY KNOW IT.

...IT'S ISONYA.

IT WAS GIVEN TO ME THIRTY MINUTES AGO.

THANK YOU.

ISONYA, HUH? WHAT A CUTE NAME.

...

I SEE.

HA HA...!

THIS ISN'T GOING WELL.

LIFT スッ...

THIS...

YOICHI, MAY I SAY SOMETHING?

!

WHAT IS IT?!

YOU SOUND...

EXACTLY LIKE SHIJU.

ISOBE SANK YOICHI'S BATTLESHIP!

IN THE WORLD...

WHY...

NO GIRL GOING TO A HOST CLUB WOULD ACT LIKE THAT.

I *DID* ACT NORMAL.

OWWWW!

CAN'T YOU JUST ACT NORMAL?

GLOOOOOM

LOOK. THAT OSSAN IS WALLOWING IN A PIT OF DESPAIR.

SHIJU

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO ABOUT IT?

ISOBE

GRIIIIND

!

I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!

MIROKU, ARE YOU READY TO GO?

YOU'LL HAVE TO BE TWICE AS WILD TO MAKE UP FOR HIM.

SINCE YOICHI'S SHOT DIDN'T GO WELL, THERE'S A LOT RESTING ON YOUR SHOULDERS, MIROKU.

GOT IT!

EXCUSE ME.

STEP

MAY I SIT NEXT TO YOU?

...NO.

IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU. I'M MIROKU.

WELL, MIROKU?

TAKE A SEAT ON MY LAP, WOULD YOU?

BA-BAM

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SIT...

WE FORGOT...

THAT'S RIGHT.

USUALLY COMES LAST!

THAT THE HARDEST OPPONENT...

RUUUUMBLE

...

WHAT WILL MIROKU DO?

OKAY!

YEAH!

THIS'LL BE A GREAT REMINDER OF THE START OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TOGETHER.

WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP IS THAT, EXACTLY?

WOW, THIS FEELS SO NOSTALGIC!

I'M NOT TOO HEAVY, AM I?

WHAT? HE... SAT DOWN?

TO GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER.

LIFT の!?

I WANT...

HEY, LAVENDERIA...

SO, UM...

WOULD YOU MIND IF I ORDERED SOME LIQUID COURAGE?

BUT I'M A LITTLE EMBARRASSED.

AND I WANT YOU TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ME.

SNAP

ONE CHAMPAGNE TOWER.

WAIT, WAIT!

THE FILM SHOOT FROM HELL CONTINUED LONG AFTER THAT.

YOU'RE BOTH MISSING THE POINT!

CUT, CUT!

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE HIDING THAT SORT OF TALENT, MIROKU.

YOU KNOW...

THE NEXT DAY

YEAH, YEAH.

HMPH! DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA.

I JUST COPIED WHAT I SAW ON TV!

CUT IT OUT, SHIJU!

GAH!

WANNA AIM FOR THE TOP SPOT?

YOU'D PROBABLY MAKE FOR A SUCCESSFUL HOST, THOUGH.

LET US SEE!

OUR SHOOT YESTERDAY IS MAKING THE ROUNDS ONLINE, BUT...

CAN YOU GUYS TAKE A LOOK AT THIS?

WHAT'S WRONG?

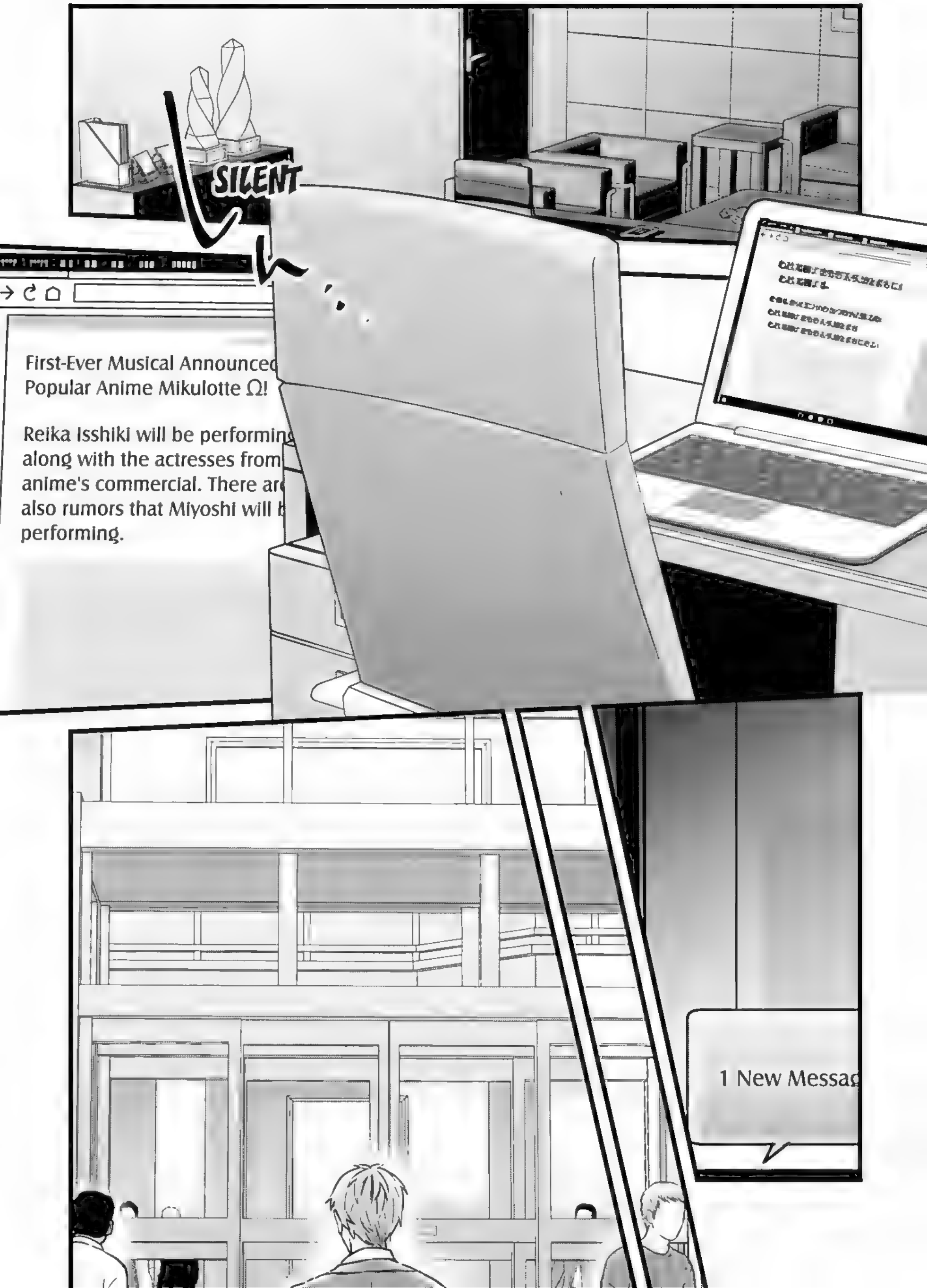
?

WHAAAAAT?!

IT TOOK A WHOLE MONTH TO CLEAR UP THE MISUNDER-STANDING.

Secret Meeting with Yoichi...
Is Mr. Lavender's Next Partner Miroku?!

Chapter 40


SILENT
First-Ever Musical Announced
Popular Anime Mikulotte Ω!
Reika Isshiki will be performing
along with the actresses from
anime's commercial. There are
also rumors that Miyoshi will b
performing.
1 New Messag

HELLO.

MR. KISARAGI, CORRECT?

THIS WAY, PLEASE.

ALL RIGHT.

...

EXCUSE ME, SIR.

YOU HAVE A VISITOR.

LET THEM IN.

HELLO.

KER-CHAK

I'VE BEEN WAITING.

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH FOR COMING...

...YOICHI KISARAGI.

AT THE SAME TIME...

UGGGH, I'M SO NERVOUS!

WE'RE JUST GREETING THE ACTRESSES TODAY.

NERVOUS? SERIOUSLY?

YEAH, YEAH.

MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE ANIME, *MIKULOTTE Ω!*

AND ON TOP OF THAT, IT'S FOR...

THIS IS MY FIRST TIME BEING IN A MUSICAL!

STILL...

BUT WE'VE PERFORMED LIVE AND COSPLAYED AS THE CHARACTERS BEFORE.

KER-CHAK

THIS AND THAT ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!

HUH?!

YOICHI ISN'T HERE?!

WHAAAT? NO WAY...

MINAMI KARIBE PLAYS MIKAN

UM, TODAY IS THE MEET-AND-GREET FOR *MIKULOTTE* Ω, RIGHT?

Y-YEAH.

AW...

UM...

YOU ARE ...?

MINAMI!

IT'S MIYOSHI.

WAIT, MINAMI!

OH...

YUI MUKUDORI PLAYS ICHIGO

YEAH, IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

LONG TIME NO SEE.

SHIJU!

YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER?

YOU'RE...

THEY WERE IN THE COMMERCIAL, REMEMBER?

OH, NOW I REMEMBER!

I DIDN'T THINK THEY'D HAVE YOU GUYS PERFORM IN THE MUSICAL, AS WELL!

IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

YES!

MINAMI, YOU WERE IN THE COMMERCIAL WITH YOICHI, RIGHT?

MIROKU, YOUR PARTNER COULDN'T MAKE IT TO THE COMMERCIAL SHOOT, RIGHT?

AND TO THINK I'D GET ANOTHER CHANCE TO APPEAR WITH HIM...!

YOICHI IS TOTALLY MY TYPE. I WAS SO HAPPY GETTING TO WORK WITH HIM!

HA HA...

IS THIS... FATE?!

DAAAAZE

ぼわ～

SHE'S THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THIS MUSICAL.

IT SEEMS SO, BUT I'M HONESTLY NOT VERY FAMILIAR WITH THE ANIME.

YEAH, SO I'LL BE MEETING HER FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY.

※DURING THE COMMERCIAL

I WONDER WHAT SHE'S LIKE.

THEN YOU NEED TO TAKE THIS AS A CHANCE TO WATCH *MIKULOTTE Ω!*

WHAT HE SAID!

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT.

I NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE GUY I'M GONNA PLAY.

YUI'S CHARACTER IS GREAT TOO.

YES!

I'M SO HAPPY TO BE PLAYING A CHARACTER I LOVE!

LEAN

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN THAT BIG A FAN?

SHIJU, YOUR CHARACTER HAS AN AMAZING ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE AND IS SUPER COOL! I HIGHLY RECOMMEND YOU WATCH THE ANIME FOR HIM TOO!

YOU'RE ALMOST AS ZEALOUS ABOUT THE SERIES AS MIROKU-...!!

AND ALL OF THE SONGS ARE FULL OF THE CHARACTERS' EMOTIONS!

EXACT-LY!

CHAT

THERE ARE A LOT OF SONGS IN *MIKULOTTE* Ω, AND ALL OF THEM ARE AMAZING!

CHAT

LET'S SEE... I'LL SING A BIT OF IT.

OH? WHAT'S IT SOUND LIKE?

SING...

AND FIGHT!

MIKULOTTE OMEGA!

I ESPECIALLY LOVE THE SONG "VERTICAL" THAT WE'RE SINGING IN THE MUSICAL.

"TINY FRAGMENTS SHINE ABOVE..."

"PARTICLES GATHER, SPARKLING IN LOVE..."

CLACK

!

FLUTTER

WHOA... SHE'S ABSOLUTELY GORGEOUS.

THAT SONG...

EH?

WHAT IS THIS, A SCHOOL RECITAL?

YOU-

AH!

YOUR PITCH WAS ALL OVER THE PLACE.

REIKA!

YOU FINALLY CAME!

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!

MIKULOTH OMEGA

TAKU ANIO
THEATER DIRECTOR

WHEN DID THE DIRECTOR GET HERE?

IT SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE IS HERE, SO LET'S GO AROUND AND DO INTRODUCTIONS!

HAH...?

I'M REIKA ISSHIKI.

THAT'S ALL.

I ONLY AGREED TO BE IN THIS BECAUSE I'D GET THE LEAD ROLE.

?!

SNUB

COULD SHE BE ANY MORE UNFRIENDLY?

SHE'S GOING TO BE HARD TO HANDLE...!

IS THAT ALL YOU WANTED FROM ME, MR. ANIO?

THERE'S NO NEED. I'VE ALREADY LOOKED UP ALL OF MY FELLOW CASTMATES.

GUYS, COULD YOU INTRODUCE YOUR-SELVES?

OH, WAIT! THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME MEETING MIYOSHI.

I SUPPOSE NOW YOU'VE MET EVERYONE.

FLUSTER

FLUSTER

AHHH....

W-WELL, WE'VE ALL BEEN INTRODUCED NOW, SO...

LET'S DO A QUICK RUN THROUGH THE SONGS, SHALL WE?

SINCE THEY'RE THE MAIN PARTS OF THE SHOW!

OKAY!

YOU ALL HAVE VIRTUALLY NO EXPERIENCE IN THEATER, RIGHT?

STAB

EH?

DO I HAVE TO DO THAT TOO?

WHY DON'T YOU USE IT TO CONFIRM YOUR OWN PARTS?

CONFIRMING MY PARTS WOULD BE A WASTE OF TIME.

I THINK IT'D BE BEST TO CONFIRM THAT THERE ARE NO MISUNDER-STANDINGS REGARDING THE SONGS I GAVE YOU AHEAD OF TIME...

HMPH.

ESPECIALLY, YOU, MISS MUKUDORI.

STAB

URK!

IN ANY CASE, I DON'T NEED THE PRACTICE.

すー GLOOOM ～

I WAS THAT BAD, HUH?

WELL, MAIN CHAR-ACTERS HAVE A LOT OF SONGS.

DOESN'T IT SOUND LIKE SHE JUST DOESN'T WANT TO SING?

WE SHOULDN'T FORCE HER.

HEY, MINAMI!

OHHH? MAYBE YOU'RE JUST SAYING THAT BECAUSE YOU CAN'T SING YOUR PARTS YET.

MR. ANIO! PLAY A SONG. ANY ONE!

EH? O-OKAY!

PLEASE DON'T LUMP ME IN WITH THE LIKES OF YOU.

HUH?

"WE MET IN THIS UNIVERSE..."

"THAT TINY BEAM OF LIGHT..."

!

SHE'S SO GOOD!

NO WONDER SHE BRAGGED SO MUCH!

"I'M SURE..."

"IF WE'RE TOGETHER..."

REIKA, YOUR SONG WAS SO BEAUTIFUL...

H-HEY, YOU'RE OFF-PITCH AGAIN!

THAT IT MADE ME WANT TO JOIN IN!

REALLY? HEH HEH... SORRY.

URK...

NOT EVERYONE CAN SING THE WAY YOU DO FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, REIKA.

...

FLUSTER

AND IT'S A DIFFICULT SONG!

W-WELL, THIS IS JUST THE FIRST DAY OF REHEARSALS!

FLUSTER

MR. ANIO!

WE'RE ALL WORKING ON THIS MUSICAL, SO LET'S GET ALONG, YEAH?

IT'S A SHAME THAT YOU HAVE SUCH GOOD LOOKS BUT REFUSE TO SMILE!

TWITCH

OKAY, ENOUGH!

BUT I—

HMM?

...UP.

OSSANS WHO USE THEIR GOOD LOOKS TO GET BY SHOULD JUST SHUT UP.

PRESSURE

おん GLOOOOOM

ぐはーっっっ!

TH-THAT'S... UM...?

FLUSTER

FLUSTER

CAN YOU MAKE THAT SONG A SOLO?

THEY JOIN FORCES TO FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES!

MELON AND ICHIGO ALWAYS OPPOSE EACH OTHER, BUT IN THAT SCENE...

THAT SONG *HAS* TO BE A DUET!

PLEASE WAIT!

FWAP

IT'S THE SERIES' MOST FAMOUS SCENE!

THEY SING ABOUT THEIR TRUE FEELINGS FOR THE LAST TIME AS THEY PREPARE TO DIE.

HUH?

...QUIET.

冷眼

CHILLING GAZE

I GET THAT YOU'RE A DIEHARD FAN, BUT COULD THE THEATER NEWB PLEASE BE QUIET?

HI GLOOOOM

ぐーろろろろろ…

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE VILLAINS WHO TRY AND SEDUCE THEM, YEAH.

WE HAVE TO PARTNER UP WITH ALL THE WOMEN IN THIS MUSICAL, RIGHT?

THE ASHAMED OSSANS

S-SOUNDS GOOD.

F-FOR NOW, LET'S JUST PRACTICE OUR DANCES IN THE CORNER, SO WE DON'T GET IN ANYONE'S WAY.

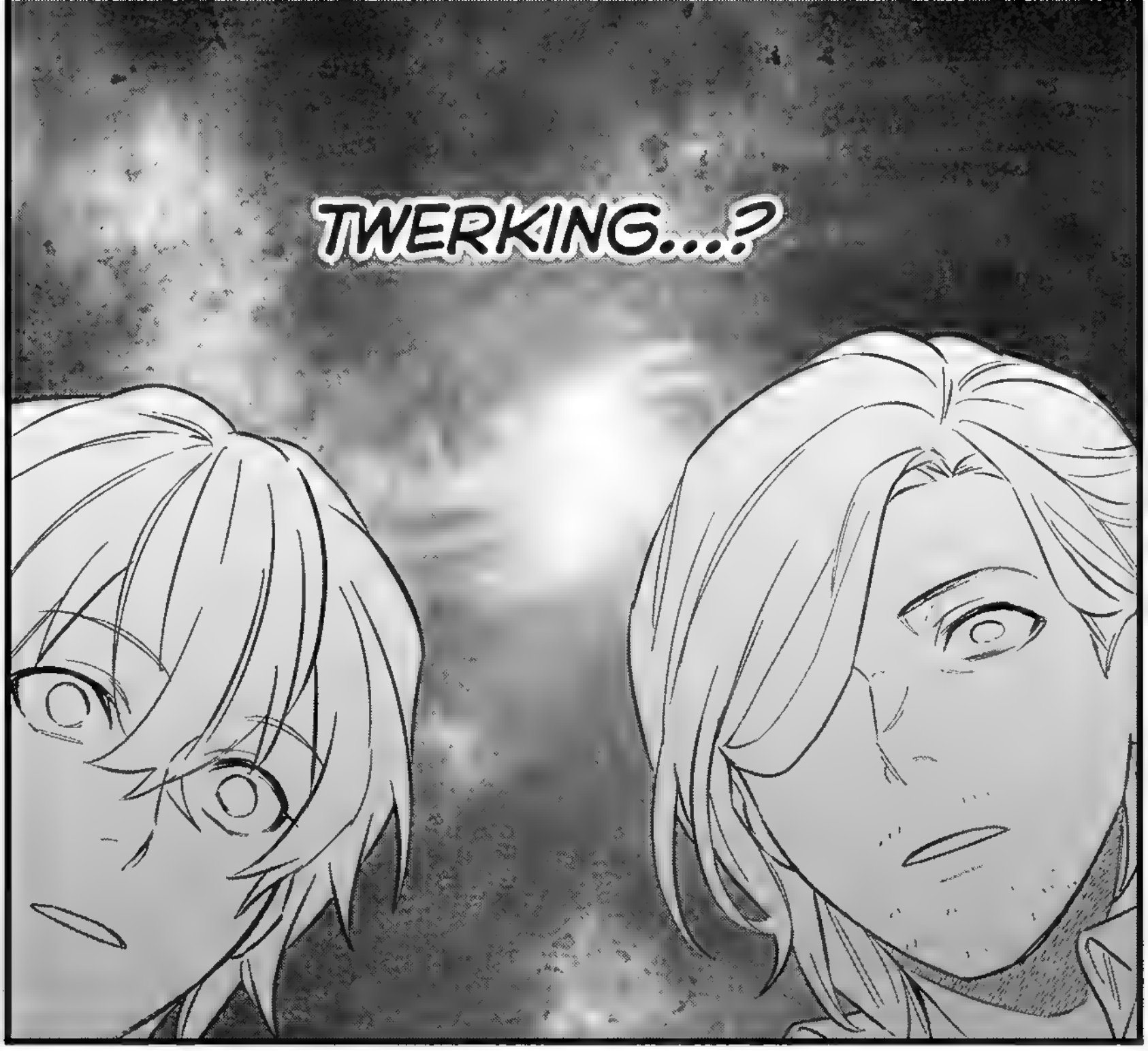
IF WE TRIED TO SEDUCE HER, SHE'D PROBABLY SLAP US!

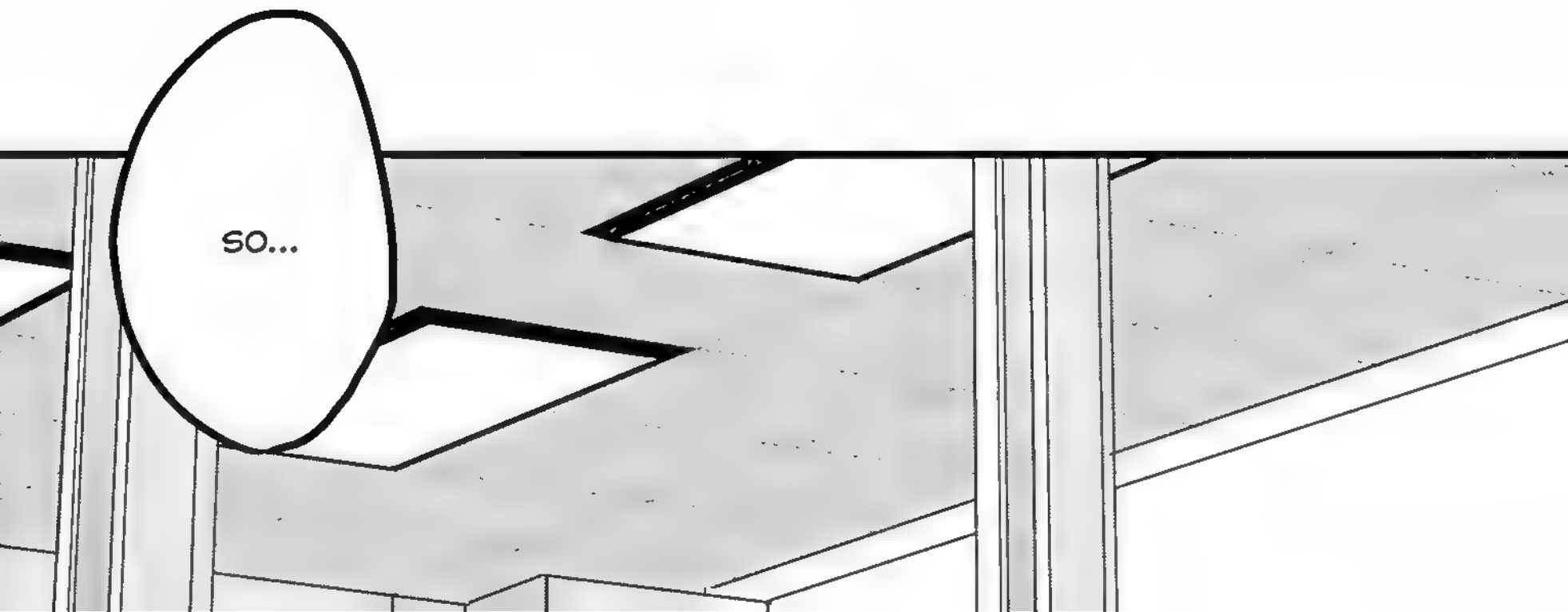
LET'S SEE. OUR FIRST DANCE IS...

MIYOSHI DANCE SCENE (TWERKING)

DANCE?

A TWERK-ING...


TWERKING...?


SO...

I CALLED YOU HERE BECAUSE I HAVE AN OFFER WE COULD BOTH BENEFIT FROM.

OH, STOP ACTING LIKE A STRANGER.

WHY DID YOU, THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF SHINEEZ, CALL ME HERE?

!

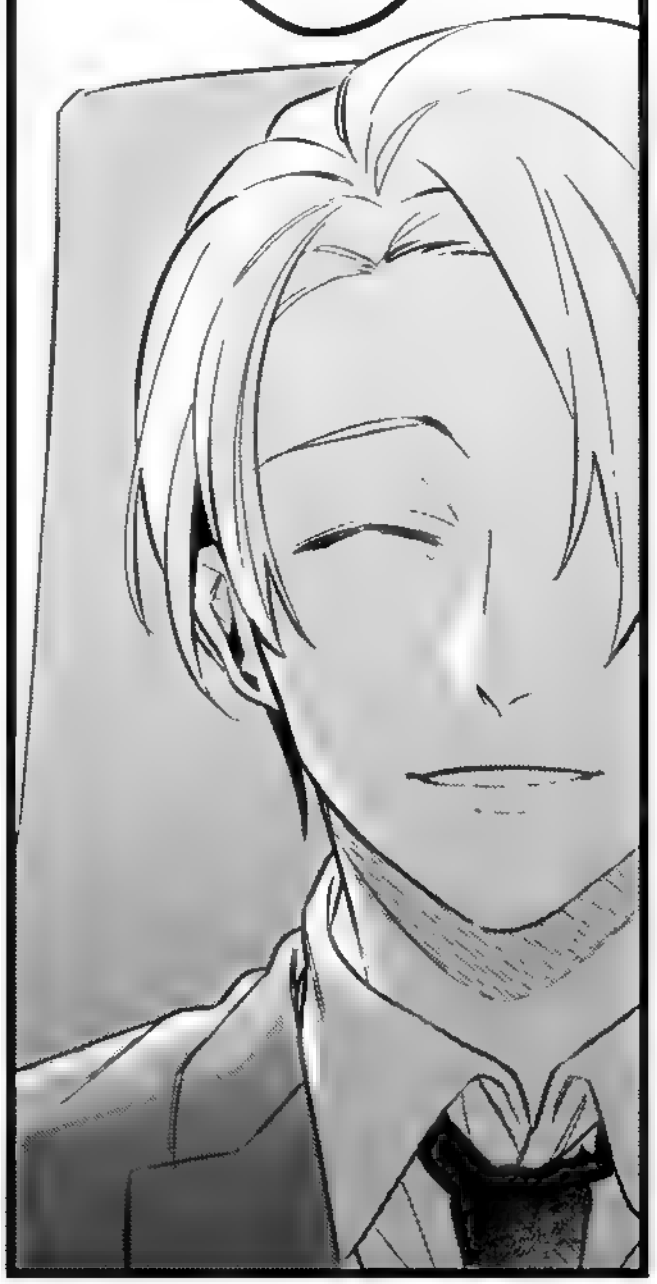
HOW COULD I POSSIBLY BENEFIT FROM THAT?

ARE YOU TRYING TO BLACKMAIL ME?

OF COURSE NOT!

I'LL CUT RIGHT TO THE CHASE.

DROP OUT OF THE MUSICAL.



ISN'T IT OBVIOUS WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF MIYOSHI, COMPLETE STRANGERS TO THE STAGE, APPEAR BESIDE HER?

THE MUSICAL IS GETTING A LOT OF ATTENTION SINCE REIKA ISSHIKI WILL BE IN IT.

AMATEURS STICKING OUT LIKE SORE THUMBS CAN RUIN THE QUALITY OF THE WHOLE PRODUCTION.

BUT IN THEATER, THE ATMOSPHERE ON THE STAGE CAN CHANGE WITH EACH PERFORMANCE.

YOU WON'T JUST STAND OUT FOR YOUR LACK OF TALENT.

IN THE TV SHOW, YOU GOT AWAY WITH JUST ACTING AS TENKA'S FOIL.

I HIGHLY SUGGEST YOU RECONSIDER YOUR ROLES.

I'M ONLY SAYING THIS OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF MY HEART.

I DON'T PLAN ON PULLING OUT OF THE MUSICAL.

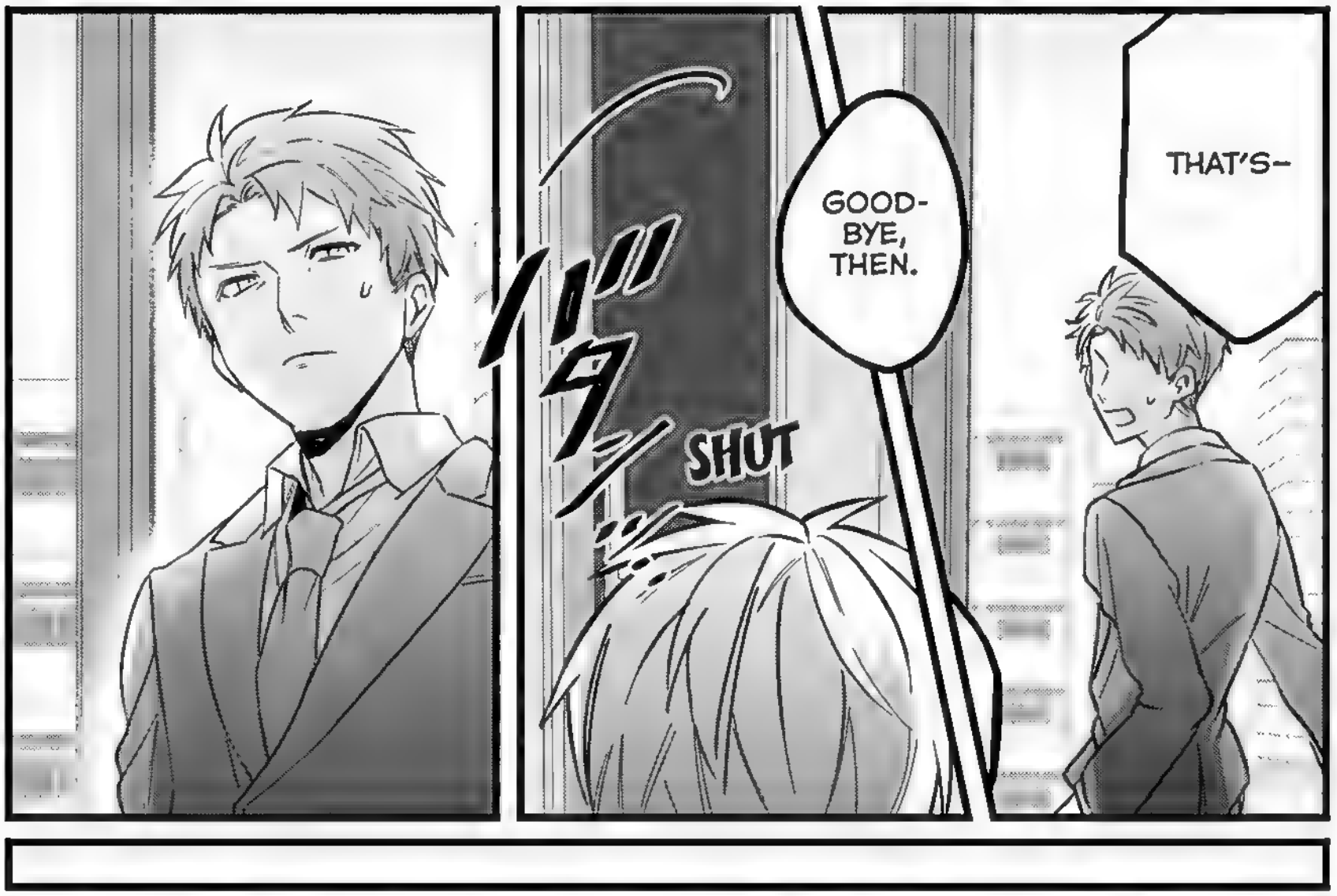
...

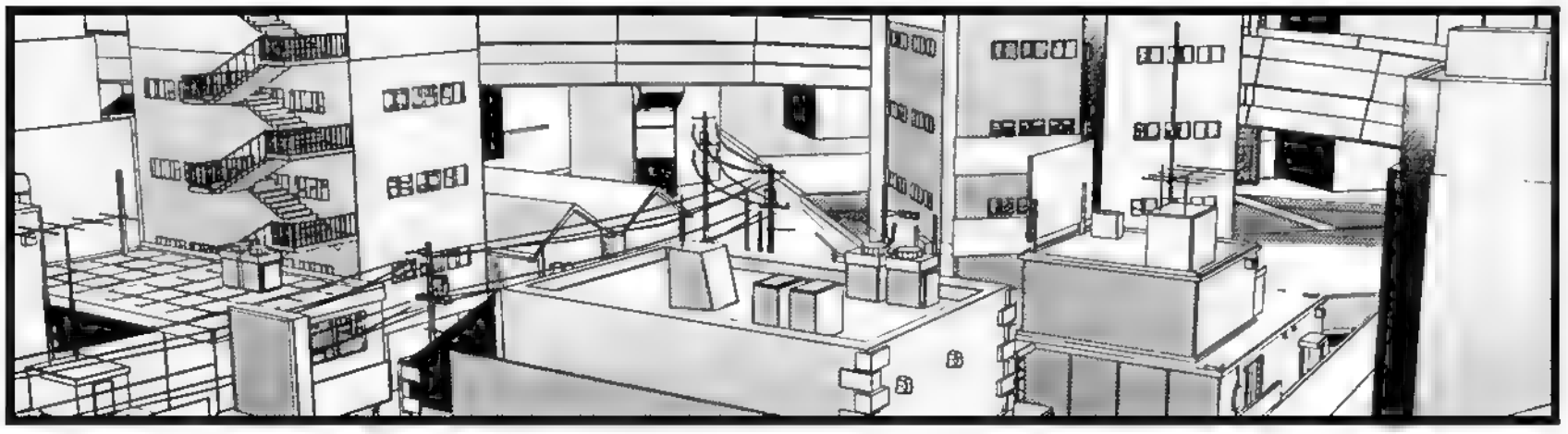
IS THAT SO?

I THOUGHT YOU WERE A MORE UNDER-STANDING MAN.

WHAT A SHAME.

DON'T TELL THE CEO ABOUT OUR LITTLE TALK.


GOOD-BYE, THEN.
THAT'S–
SHUT



KER-CHAK
SORRY I'M LATE.

ARGH! I CAN'T HANDLE THIS!

TWERK-ING?!

HUH? I DON'T GET HOW IT'S WRONG.

YOUR PITCH IS STILL WRONG!

MR. ANIO!

CHAOS

WHAT IS WITH THIS DANCE?

I UNDER-STAND YOUR CONCERN, BUT...

AT THIS RATE...

WILL THIS MUSICAL BE OKAY?

Chapter 41

AND TURN! MIROKU, COME FORWARD.

ONE!

TWO!

OOPS!

BUT I JUST CAN'T GET THINGS RIGHT WHEN I TRY TO FOCUS ON ACTING TOO.

WE'RE SINGING WHILE DANC-ING...

JUST LIKE WE WOULD AT A CONCERT.

MMM...

CONCERTS AND MUSI-CALS MAY BE SIMILAR, BUT THE WAY YOU PERFORM IS DIFFERENT.

SORRY, MIROKU. ARE YOU OKAY?

Y-YEAH. SORRY, I FORGOT I WAS SUPPOSED TO MOVE TO THE FRONT.

BUT IN PLAYS, YOU HAVE TO USE THE ENTIRE STAGE TO EXPRESS THEM.

ON TV, YOU'RE ACTING TO EXPRESS TO THE CAMERAS AS MANY OF THE CHARACTER'S FINE NUANCES AS YOU CAN.

REC

APPARENTLY, ACTING IS DIFFERENT BETWEEN TV SHOWS AND PLAYS TOO.

REALLY?

GETTING ADVICE FROM SOMEONE EXPERIENCED WOULD BE BEST, BUT...

...

BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO PAY ATTENTION TO DETAIL.

AND YOUR GESTURES ARE A LOT BIGGER.

THE SIZES OF WHAT YOU CAN SEE ON A SCREEN VERSUS WHAT YOU CAN SEE ON A STAGE ARE DIFFERENT.

YOICHI'S BEEN ACTING STRANGE.

I'LL HAVE TO TALK TO HIM LATER.

OKAY!

FOR NOW, LET'S GO OVER THE STEPS AGAIN.

GAAAAH!

?!

JOLT

HOW MANY TIMES ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME SAY THIS?!

RUUUUUMBLE

YOU'RE TOTALLY TONE-DEAF!

PINCH

BUT I GO OFF-PITCH WHEN THERE'S NO BACKING TRACK.

AND PRACTICED OVER AND OVER WHILE LISTENING TO THE RECORDING YOU MADE FOR ME.

GLUM

UM, I'M REALLY SORRY. I TRIED SINGING WITH A BUCKET ON MY HEAD...

IT'S HARD TO STAY ANGRY WHEN SHE'S TRYING SO HARD...!

MR. ANIO!

SO I'LL WORK EVEN HARDER TO GET IT RIGHT!

STILL, I WANT TO STAND ONSTAGE WITH EVERYONE...

MR...

DO SOME-THING! YOU'RE THE DIREC-TOR, AREN'T YOU?!

HELP ME

I UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WAS SAYING.

WILL WE REALLY BE ABLE TO MAKE THE MUSICAL A SUCCESS?

THAT'S WHY WE'LL DEFINITELY STAND OUT TO THE CROWD WHEN COMPARED TO HER.

MISS ISSHIKI HAS BOTH EXPERIENCE AND TALENT, SO ALL EYES ARE ON HER.

IS APPEARING IN THIS MUSICAL REALLY THE BEST IDEA FOR HER, THE OTHER WOMEN, AND MIYOSHI?

SHIJU...

YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL YOUR BIG BRO IF SOMETHING'S WORRYING YOU.

BIG BRO? EVEN THOUGH I'M OLDER?

FORGET ABOUT THE DETAILS.

!

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, OSSAN?

ACTUALLY...

I FIGURED YOU HAD A SECRET THAT WAS WEIGHING ON YOU.

OF COURSE. WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS SINCE BEFORE WE BECAME MIYOSHI.

SO... TELL ME WHY YOU'VE HAD YOUR HEAD IN THE CLOUDS SINCE THE DAY OF THE INTRODUCTIONS.

!

YOU NOTICED BACK THEN?

SIIIIZ-

HAH?! SHINEEZ'S VICE-PRESIDENT THREATENED YOU?!

WELL...

WHY IS SHINEEZ WORRIED ABOUT A TINY AGENCY LIKE OURS?

I WOULDN'T SAY HE THREATENED ME. MORE LIKE... WARNED ME?

WEREN'T YOU FRIENDS WITH THE CEO BEFORE, YOICHI?

YEAH, WE WERE CLOSE.

BUT THE VICE-PRESIDENT WAS SOMEONE ELSE BACK THEN.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, EITHER WAY.

RIGHT. I DON'T THINK WE EVER MET BEFORE THIS.

HE KEEPS HASSLING YOU EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T KNOW HIM?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO ABOUT THE MUSICAL?

TALKING THINGS OUT DIDN'T MAKE YOU FEEL ANY BETTER, RIGHT?

SO WHAT'LL YOU DO?

HUH?

I'M ASKING IF YOU'RE UP TO THE CHALLENGE.

STILL... NOT SURE.

I'M...

MAYBE SHINEEZ WOULD MAKE IT MORE OF A SUCCESS...

I WONDER IF IT'S REALLY A GOOD IDEA FOR US TO PERFORM.

ARGH, THIS IS SO ANNOYING!

SO, ARE YOU MOTIVATED?

OR DO YOU PLAN ON MAKING US LOOK LAME?

U-UP TO THE CHALLENGE?

EXACTLY.

YOU CAN FIGURE OUT THE THING WITH SHINEEZ AND WHAT'S BEST FOR MIYOSHI LATER.

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IS YOUR MOTIVATION.

IF YOU'RE NOT MOTIVATED, YOU'LL MAKE THE GUYS GOING OUT THERE AND GIVING IT THEIR ALL LOOK LIKE IDIOTS.

NOW I FEEL STUPID FOR WORRYING ABOUT EVERYTHING ON MY OWN.

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'VE ALWAYS WORRIED TOO MUCH.

GREAT WORK TODAY, EVERYONE!

WHO HAS THE KEY?

OH, I HAVE IT! I'M GOING TO STAY AND PRACTICE A LITTLE LONGER.

DON'T STAY TOO LATE. GET PLENTY OF REST.

I WILL!

MAYBE I SHOULD LISTEN TO REIKA'S RECORDING AGAIN.

HMM... I ALWAYS GO A LITTLE SHARP THERE.

LET'S SEE, I LEFT IT OVER HERE...

WHOSE IS IT?

IT'S REALLY DIRTY.

SOME-ONE'S SCRIPT?

DIRTY

MIKULOTTE Ω
-THE STAGE-

SCRIPT

FLIP

THIS PERSON PAID ATTENTION TO ALL THE DIRECTIONS THE OTHERS GOT AND WROTE DOWN THEIR BAD HABITS...

THERE ARE SO MANY NOTES... AND THEY'RE FOR ALL THE DIFFERENT PARTS!

!!

IT'S BEEN THUMBED THROUGH SO MUCH THAT IT'S ON ITS LAST LEG!

THIS SCRIPT ISN'T DIRTY.

DID YOU STAY BEHIND TO PRACTICE TOO, REIKA?

PLEASE DON'T LUMP ME IN WITH A CERTAIN SOMEONE.

REIKA!

OH, ARE YOU PLAYING HOOKY?

BUT WHOSE COULD IT BE?

!

KER-CHAK

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO FORGET SOMETHING.

OH?

I JUST CAME TO GET SOMETHING I FORGOT.

GLARE

FWAP

THIS MUCH IS NORMAL.

SO WHAT?

YOU TOOK SO MANY NOTES!

IS THAT YOURS?

WHAT IF IT IS?

THAT JUST SHOWS HOW MUCH YOU LOVE THE STAGE.

REIKA, YOU'RE SUCH A HARD WORKER.

YOU DIDN'T WRITE NOTES FOR JUST YOURSELF, BUT FOR ALL THE TIMES SOMEONE WAS GIVEN DIRECTIONS!

THAT'S NOT TRUE!

...

BUT WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, I'M REMINDED THAT MY BEST ISN'T NEARLY ENOUGH.

I'M GENUINELY TRYING MY BEST...

HA HA...

BUT I DON'T WANT TO DRAG EVERY-ONE ELSE DOWN.

I LOVE THE STAGE, SO I DON'T WANT TO GIVE UP.

I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHAT TO DO ANYMORE.

IT'S LIKE...

I'M SORRY...

I'M SORRY...

I'M SORRY...

EH?

YOU ARE... REALLY CLUMSY.

YOU TAKE AFTER ME, SO I KNOW YOU CAN DO THIS!

WORK HARDER NEXT TIME, AND GET IT RIGHT!

I'M SORRY...

...

THE WAY YOU'RE DOING THINGS NOW, YOU WON'T IMPROVE BY OPENING NIGHT.

SIMPLY PRACTICING WON'T GET YOU THE RESULTS YOU WANT.

I'LL... OUT.

HUH?

SO...

WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IS FINDING THE WAY YOU CAN IMPROVE THE MOST EFFICIENTLY IN THE TIME YOU HAVE LEFT.

I SAID...

I'LL HELP YOU OUT!

THE MUSICAL *MIKULOTTE Ω*.

THANK YOU FOR COMING TO SEE...

THE BATTLE OVER EARTH BETWEEN MULTIPLE PLANETS INTENSIFIED BY THE DAY.

FLAP

PRINCE MIROKU WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO INTENDED TO CONQUER EARTH.

PLEASE ENJOY THE SHOW TONIGHT.

I KNEW IT.

I NEED...

TO GO TO EARTH.

I'LL GO ALONE!

PLEASE WAIT!

ALLOW US TO GO WITH YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS.

FWAP!!!

WE VOW TO STAND BY YOUR SIDE.

I'VE ALREADY MADE PREPARATIONS FOR THE EXPEDITION.

IF YOU MUST LEAVE, I SUGGEST LEAVING TONIGHT.

...

UNDER-STOOD.

I EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM YOU, YOICHI.

OKAY!

THE NEXT SCENE IS STARTING SOON. MELON, ICHIGO, GET READY TO GO!

YOICHI IS SO COOL!

THEY REALLY WORKED HARD TO GET EVERYTHING DOWN IN TIME.

WHOA, MIYOSHI'S DOING GREAT!

LET'S ENJOY OURSELVES OUT THERE.

MELON!

WHAT'S WRONG?

HUH?

UH...

...OF COURSE.

WITH THE MUSIC FOR THE NEXT SONG WAS HERE, BUT IT'S GONE.

THE CD...

THAT DOESN'T MATTER!

WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING! THE GIRLS ARE...

WHAT?!

IT WAS DEFINITELY HERE.

COULD THAT GUY WHO WAS HERE EARLIER HAVE TAKEN IT?

ALREADY OUT ON STAGE!

FINALLY, IT'S TIME FOR OUR SONG!

MELON, DON'T SAY THAT!

...

ICHIGO, I'M SICK OF YOU!

?!

THE MUSIC ISN'T PLAYING.

Audio trouble. No music!

IT'S PRINCE MIROKU AND HIS GANG!

THERE'S NO MUSIC?

THE ENEMY IS ATTACK-ING!

...

I'LL DEFINITELY GO OFF-PITCH!

WHAT ARE THE WORDS FOR THE NEXT SONG?

I HAVE TO ACT.

I CAN'T JUST FREEZE...

BUT I'M ONSTAGE NOW.

NO...

I HAVE TO SING.

CAN I JUST SKIP THE SONG?

I HAVE TO...!

INHALE

MELON IS SINGING THE BACKGROUND MELODY FOR ME!

IF WE'RE TOGETH-ER...

I'LL BE ABLE TO SING WITH HER!

THAT TINY BEAM OF LIGHT...

WE MET IN THIS UNIVERSE...

WITH THIS!...

I'M SO HAPPY WE COULD SING TOGETHER!

YES, SO AM I.

GIVE ME ALL OF YOUR PURE SOULS!

WHOA!

NOW, LET'S DESTROY THEM!

FOLLOW ME, MEN!

DONE? TODAY WAS JUST THE FIRST DAY OF PERFOR-MANCES.

YEAH, BUT WE GOT THROUGH THE FIRST DAY WITHOUT ANY MAJOR ISSUES.

WE'RE DONE!

...

WHAT'S UP, MIROKU?

I HOPE THE CD DISAPPEARING WASN'T A TRICK BEING PLAYED ON US BY SHINEEZ.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL!

THERE *WERE* AUDIO ISSUES, THOUGH.

OF COURSE THAT WAS AMAZING.

BUT HER ACTING AFTER THAT WAS SPECTACULAR TOO.

I WAS JUST THINKING HOW AMAZING REIKA IS.

OH, RIGHT! SHE REALLY BLEW MY MIND WHEN SHE AD-LIBBED...

AND SANG A CAPPELLA!

SHE'S GOT POWER, AND IT'S LIKE SHE KNOWS HOW TO MOVE TO SHOW HERSELF OFF THE BEST.

IT'S NOT JUST HER BEAUTY.

SHE USES THE STAGE WELL.

BECAUSE I REALIZED HOW FAR I STILL HAVE LEFT TO GO.

SEEING HER PERFORM UP-CLOSE IS SUPER FRUSTRAT-ING...

I COULD HAVE DONE THINGS BETTER.

I COULD HAVE *BEEN* SO MUCH BETTER!

MIROKU...

I HATE HOW INADEQUATE I AM.

MIROKU, IF THAT'S...

HOW YOU FEEL...

...THEN LET'S IMPROVE TOGETHER.

ALL THREE OF US WILL IMPROVE AS MEMBERS OF MIYOSHI.

YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO WISHES THEY COULD'VE DONE BETTER.

OKAY!

Chapter 42

キラ SPARKLE

キラ SPARKLE

WHITE SAND...

HOTTIES IN BIKINIS...

BLUE WAVES AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE...

SPARKLE

FINALLY!

WE'VE MADE IT...

TO THE SOUTHERN ISLANDS (OVERSEAS)!

ONE WEEK EARLIER

AN OFFER FOR A MIYOSHI PHOTOBOOK.

?!

WE'VE FINALLY RECEIVED...

WHERE'S THE PHOTO SHOOT?

THE PHOTOG-RAPHER SUGGEST-ED AN ISLAND.

I SEE...

THE DAY HAS COME FOR US TO BREAK OUT OUR GRASS SKIRTS...

TA-DA!

WHY DID YOUR MIND IMMEDI-ATELY GO THERE?!

ONCE A DEPARTURE DATE IS DECIDED, BRING YOUR PASSPORTS TO THE AGENCY, SO I CAN KEEP THEM SAFE.

OH, BUT PLEASE MAKE SURE THEY'RE STILL VALID.

WAIT, ARE GRASS SKIRTS NOT A THING ANYMORE?!

MIROKU, THAT'S SUCH AN OLD STEREOTYPE.

YOUR IDEA OF THE SOUTHERN ISLANDS IS SO HEAVILY PREJU-DICED.

THAT REMINDS ME, YOU USED TO BE A SHUT-IN.

MIROKU, DO YOU NOT HAVE ONE?

URK, I NEED ONE, HUH?

...PASSPORT?

THIS WILL BE MIYOSHI'S FIRST OVERSEAS PHOTO SHOOT!

HOW EXCITING!

I'LL GET MY PASSPORT RIGHT AWAY.

GRIN

YOU'RE SO SIMPLE-MINDED!

IS GOING ON AN OVERSEAS TRIP?!

SHOCK

OUR MIROKU...

I ALREADY HAVE MINE FOR WORK. WHAT ABOUT YOU, NINA?

WHY DON'T WE ALL GET OUR PASSPORTS WHILE WE'RE AT IT?

STILL, CONGRAT-ULATIONS! I'LL COOK *SEKIHAN* FOR DINNER TONIGHT!

IT'S A PHOTO SHOOT FOR WORK, NOT A TRIP.

I'M A SHUT-IN TOO. I DON'T EVER LEAVE JAPAN'S BORDERS.

I THINK YOU'RE TAKING LIBERTIES WITH THE DEFINITION OF "SHUT-IN."

YOUR ENGLISH GRADES WERE IN THE NEGATIVES, YET YOU'RE SERIOUSLY GOING OVERSEAS? ARE YOU CRAZY?

IS THAT ANY WAY TO TALK TO YOUR OLDER BROTHER?!

AWWW, YOU SHOULD GET YOURS, NINA!

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT MIROKU NOW, NOT ME.

I WONDER WHAT FUMI SAID TO CONVINCE YOU.

?!

IT'S FOR WORK, SO I HAVE TO APPLY FOR ONE.

WH-WHAT?

HUH. AND TO THINK YOU USED TO HATE LEAVING THE HOUSE.

OHHH?

SMIRK

SMIRK

STOP LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT!

WHAT?! NO, IT'S REALLY JUST FOR WORK! HONEST!

NINA IS RIGHT.

THE OLD YOU WOULD HAVE REFUSED TO GO OUT, SAYING YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WEAR FOR YOUR PASSPORT PHOTO. BUT YOU COULDN'T GO SHOPPING FOR NEW CLOTHES BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T HAVE AN OUTFIT TO GO SHOPPING IN, EITHER.

I-I CAN'T DENY THAT...!

MIROKU... YOU'VE CHANGED SO MUCH.

FOR THE BETTER.

I'M NOT SURE HOW I FEEL ABOUT A SINGLE PASSPORT MAKING YOU THINK I'VE CHANGED THAT MUCH.

IT'LL BE A PLEASURE WORKING WITH YOU.

SAME HERE.

I'M NOT A KID, YOU KNOW!

MIROKU, YOU GOT YOUR PASSPORT, RIGHT?

BOARDING HAS BEGUN AT GATE SEVEN.

THIS IS MY FIRST TIME.

SHIJU...

RAISE

YOU WANT A BLANKET, RIGHT?

SHINE きゃる

CAN I COVER MYSELF WITH YOUR CAPABLE HANDS?

Can I help you with anything?

きゃる SHINE

STOP MAKING IT SOUND SO DIRTY!

DON'T TREAT ME LIKE AN INTER-PRETER, YA HEAR?

WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT COMMUNICATING IN ENGLISH AS LONG AS SHIJU'S WITH US.

Couid I get a blanket ?

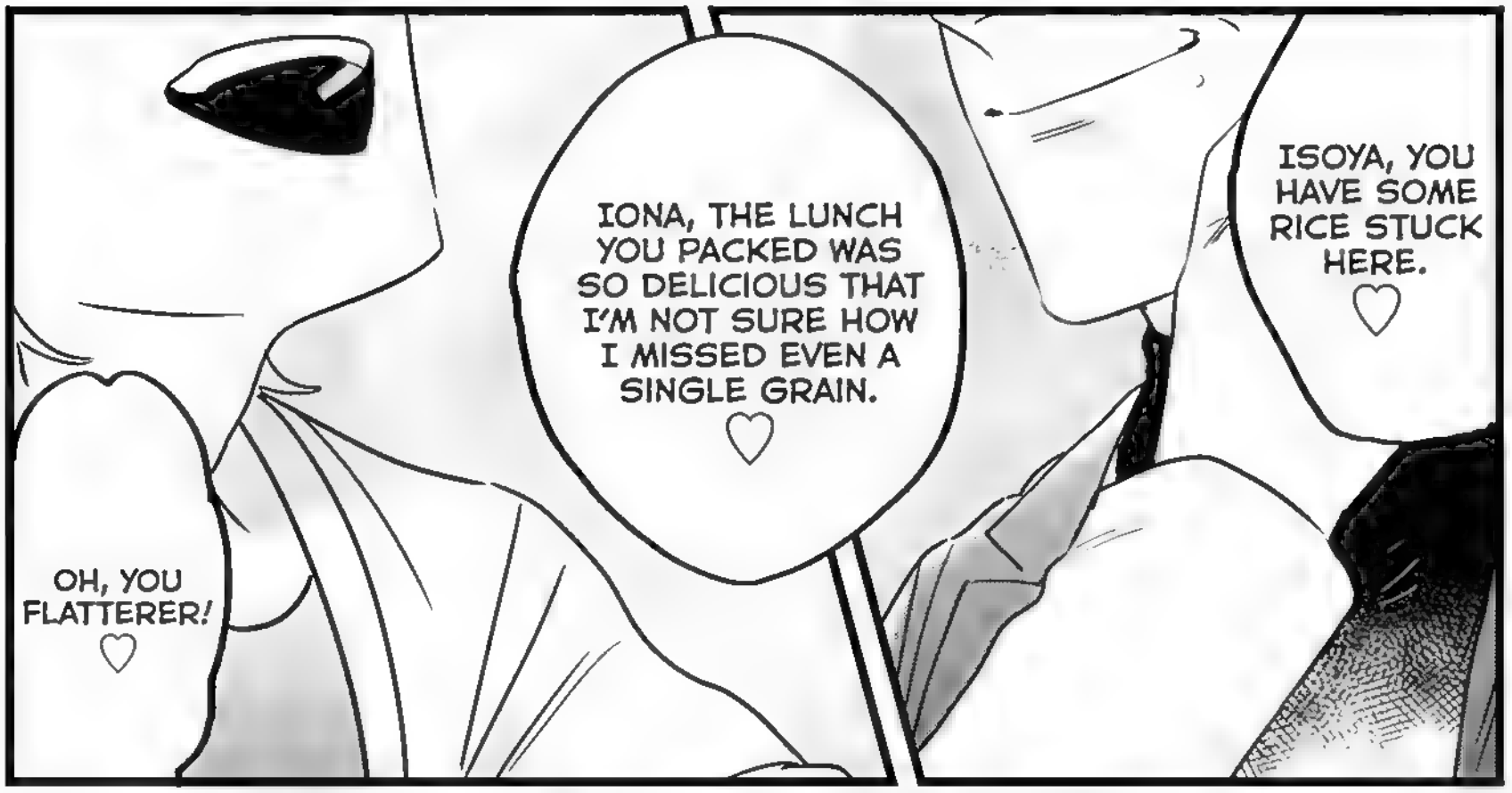
Here you are.

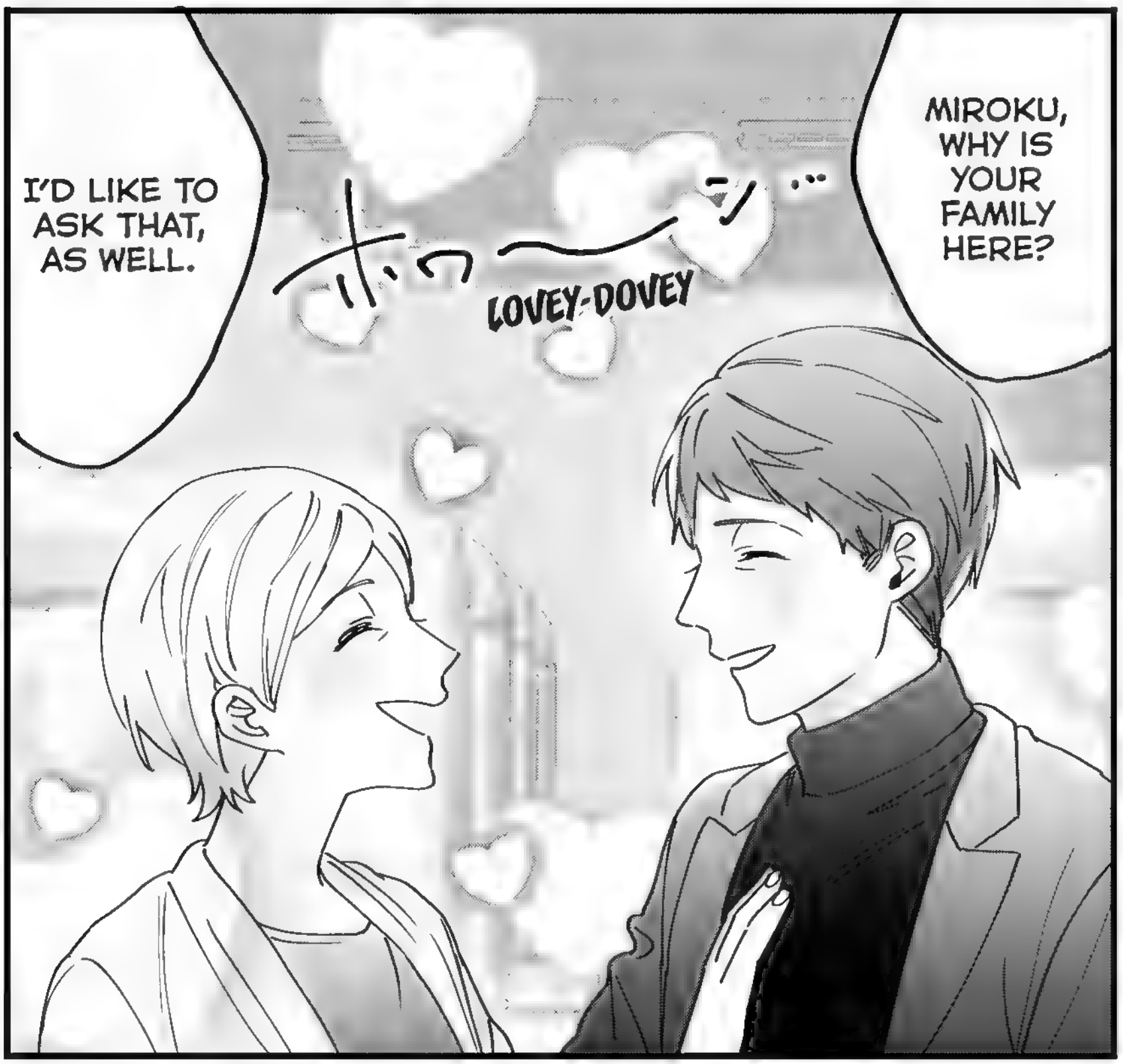
OH, THANKS!

HERE, MIROKU.

BY THE WAY...

UM...


IONA, THE LUNCH YOU PACKED WAS SO DELICIOUS THAT I'M NOT SURE HOW I MISSED EVEN A SINGLE GRAIN.
ISOYA, YOU HAVE SOME RICE STUCK HERE.
OH, YOU FLATTERER!


I'D LIKE TO ASK THAT, AS WELL.
LOVEY-DOVEY
MIROKU, WHY IS YOUR FAMILY HERE?

I GET WHY MIROKU'S PARENTS MIGHT WANT TO COME, BUT...

HONEYMOON? OH, ISOYA...

WE THOUGHT WE COULD TAKE THE SAME FLIGHT AS YOU ALL TO OUR HONEYMOON.

SINCE WE ALL GOT OUR PASSPORTS AT THE SAME TIME...

THE HOTEL YOU ALL ARE STAYING IN PURCHASES FROM MY COMPANY, SO I THOUGHT I'D CHECK IN ON THEM.

I'M GOING FOR WORK.

SAME.

MY MANAGER TOLD ME TO STUDY SCALP MASSAGES AND HAIR TREATMENTS HERE.

...!

THAT'S RIGHT! WE'RE ROOTING FOR YOU!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT US. JUST FOCUS ON YOUR WORK, MIROKU!

LOVEY-DOVEY

LOVEY-DOVEY

THEY REALLY LOVE YOU, MIROKU.

THEY MUST ALL BE WORRIED FOR YOU SINCE THIS IS YOUR FIRST TRIP OVERSEAS.

URGH...

I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT.

BUT TO HAVE MY FAMILY ACCOMPANY ME AT THIS AGE...!

I AT LEAST WANT TO LEARN BASIC GREETINGS...
WAIT, WHERE'S MIROKU?
YOU CAN HAVE MORE FUN ON TRIPS LIKE THESE IF YOU TRY TO LEARN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE.

OM SWASTYASTU!
(I PRAY EVERYTHING IS WELL WITH YOU.)

SAPUNAPI ORTINE?
(HOW ARE YOU?)

I'M GOOD.

THANK YOU.

NAH, THAT'S THE ALL-POWERFUL LANGUAGE OF AN AIRHEAD.

MIROKU CAN UNDERSTAND INDONESIAN?!

BEING AN AIRHEAD CAN BE THAT USEFUL?!

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GUYS GOT ROOMS IN THE SAME HOTEL AS US.

WILL DO.

WE'RE HEADING OFF TO WORK, SO PLEASE LOOK AFTER MIROKU FOR US.

YOU HAVE TO GO TO WORK TOO.

SMACK

I'LL PICK YOU UP WHEN YOU'RE DONE, SO PLEASE MESSAGE–

HAVE A NICE DAY, MIHACHI.

I-I WILL.

SHIJU.

URK...

WILL YOU STOP ACTING SO WEIRD EVERY TIME YOU'RE AROUND MIROKU'S OLDER SISTER?

TELL THAT TO MIROKU FOR ME, WOULD YOU?

FWIP

G-

GOOD LUCK ON YOUR PHOTO SHOOT.

SHUT UP.

YOU'RE ONE TO TALK.

URGH...

SHE'S SO CUTE!

SLUMP

LET'S BEGIN THE PHOTO SHOOT.

WE'LL START WITH YOU, MIROKU.

OKAY!

カメラ

KA-SHAK

LOOKING GOOD!

パシャ

KA-SHAK

ONE LAST SHOT, PLEASE.

IT'S HARD TO ACT NORMAL UNDER PRESSURE...

BE OURSELVES?

NEXT, WE'LL TAKE SOME CANDID SHOTS OF THE THREE OF YOU. PRETEND WE'RE NOT HERE AND JUST BE YOURSELVES!

HEY, YOICHI.

?!

SPLASH

TAKE THIS! ♡

THIS IS US BEING OURSELVES, RIGHT?

!

HA HA HA! YOU'RE COMPLETELY SOAKED!

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, SHIJU?!

YOU...!

THAT WAS GREAT!

THE CONCEPT IS "RELAXING AT A RESORT WITH MIYOSHI."

NEXT, I PLAN ON TAKING SOME CONCEPT SHOTS.

WE GOT LOTS OF GREAT SHOTS.

CONCEPT SHOTS?

EXCEPT...

IT'S ALREADY GETTING LATE, AND I THINK IT'D BE HARD TO GET SOME LOCAL GIRLS TO COOPERATE WITH US.

YES, BUT IT'S HARD TO MAKE THEM LOOK REALISTIC UNLESS YOU'RE ACTUALLY WITH SOMEONE.

SO YOU'LL TAKE THE PHOTOS AS IF WE'RE WITH SOME-ONE?

WE NEED A WAY TO MAKE THE PHOTOS LOOK REALISTIC.

AND WE CAN'T USE LOCAL GIRLS.

IT'S GETTING LATE...

キュピーン

DING-A-LING

WE...

EXCUSE ME.

KNOW SOME WOMEN WHO MIGHT BE WILLING TO HELP.

?!

THIS IS DELICIOUS.

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME?

WAAAAY TOO CLOSE!

YOU'RE TOO CLOSE!

?!

THIS BREEZE FEELS AMAZING.

HEY, YOU'LL STAY BY MY SIDE FOREVER, WON'T YOU?

HEY!

WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE ME?!

?!

?!

THIS BED IS SO COMFY!

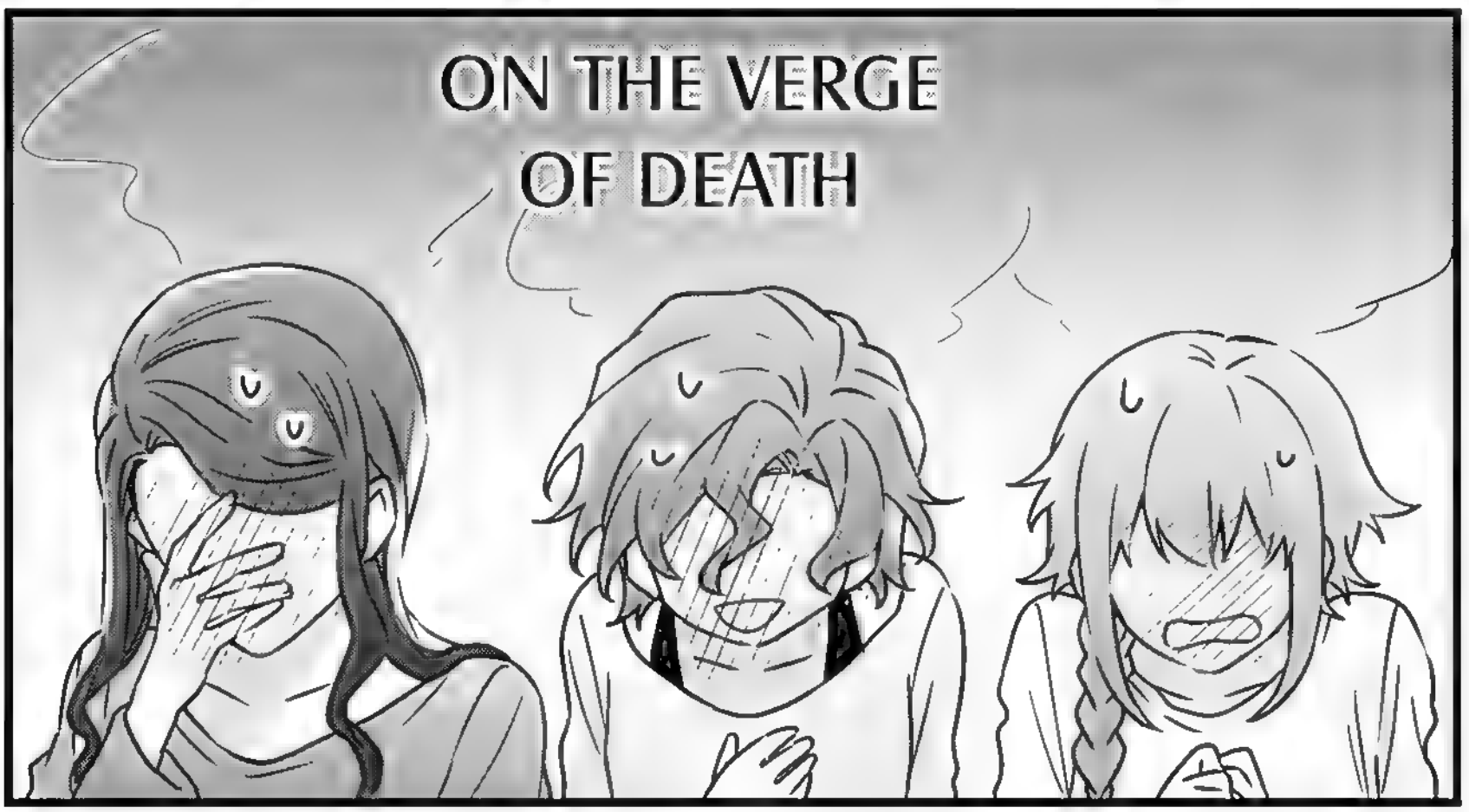
COME ON, LIE DOWN WITH ME.

MIROKU?!

FUMI, IT'S CUTE HOW RED YOUR FACE IS.

...?!

...
SATISFIED


ON THE VERGE
OF DEATH

ANYWAY, YOUR EXPRESSIONS DURING THE LAST SHOTS WITH THE WOMEN WERE AMAZING.

YOU REALLY LOOKED LIKE COUPLES!

THANK YOU, AS WELL.

BOW

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK TODAY! I THINK THE SHOOT WAS A REAL SUCCESS.

PLEASE DON'T!

HEH HEH. I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT! PLEASE CALL US IF YOU EVER NEED MORE PHOTOS.

GRIP

Chapter 43

THE SPIRIT OF THE SEA IS ENSHRINED HERE.

THIS TEMPLE HAS BEEN...

A POPULAR SPIRITUAL TRAVEL DESTINATION FOR A LONG, LONG TIME.

HEY, DON'T WANDER AROUND AND GET SEPARATED FROM THE GROUP.

I KNOW.

IT REALLY FEELS LIKE WE'RE IN THE TROPICS NOW!

YOU CAN'T FIND ANY OF THIS IN JAPAN.

WELL, THAT'S TRUE.

IT'S JUST SO EXCITING. I FEEL LIKE I'M IN ANOTHER WORLD!

I BET THERE ARE LOTS OF WILD ANIMALS HERE, THOUGH.

BEING SURROUNDED BY NATURE IS THE BEST!

WE DIDN'T GO TOO FAR FROM THE HOTEL FOR THE PHOTO SHOOT.

WILD ANIMALS?

SO WE DIDN'T GET TO SEE ALL OF THIS.

DIDN'T OUR GUIDE SAY...

RUSTLE

...

SNATCH スパー

...TO WATCH OUT FOR THE MONKEYS?

I'M AWARE OF THAT, THANK YOU!

HE GRABBED THAT FROM YOU AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT, MIROKU.

COULD I HAVE THAT BACK?

HEY, MISS MONKEY...

WHAAAT?!

WELL, JUST GIVE UP. YOU CAN'T WIN AGAINST AN ANIMAL.

BOW

ナ…

YOUR PHERO-MONES WORK ON MONKEYS TOO?!

REACH ち？！

YOUR DEFINITION OF "RELATED" IS EXTREMELY BROAD.

I DON'T THINK IT DID.

(HUMANS AND APES REALLY ARE RELATED!

IT UNDER-STOOD WHEN I TALKED TO IT!

HEY, LOOK! ISN'T THAT A SOUVENIR SHOP?

SPARKLE

SPARKLE

SPARKLE

WOW!

HUH? MIROKU, DID YOU ALREADY DECIDE ON WHAT YOU'RE GETTING?

SAME HERE!

EVERYTHING'S SO LOVELY! I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO PICK!

WAIT, WAIT, WAIT!

YEP! I WAS JUST ABOUT TO GO AND PAY.

WHY?!

MIROKU, PLEASE PUT THOSE BACK WHERE YOU FOUND THEM.

STARE

AS USUAL, YOUR TASTES AMAZE ME.

HONESTLY, I'M SURPRISED YOU FOUND THOSE OUT OF EVERYTHING IN HERE.

DAAAZE
ほ
FUMI, HAVE YOU DECIDED ON ANYTHING?
UH, NO.
ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THAT NECKLACE?
YES. IT'S SO PRETTY.

WHAT? THAT'S SUCH A SHAME. IT'D LOOK GOOD ON YOU.

I WOULDN'T HAVE MUCH OF A CHANCE TO WEAR SOMETHING SO CUTE.

BUT I CAN'T REALLY WEAR JEWELRY DURING WORK HOURS.

FREEZE

FREEZE

?

FLIP

HOW MUCH IS IT?

THAT PRICE IS NOT CUTE...!

I GUESS IT JUST WASN'T MEANT TO BE.

MIROKU!

THEY'RE HUGE! WHERE WOULD YOU EVEN PUT THEM?!

I CAN'T GET THEM?!

PROBABLY CURSED

EH?

STOP GAZING OFF INTO SPACE AND PUT THOSE BACK.

TA-DA!

I HIGHLY SUGGEST YOU DON'T.

MAYBE IN MY FAMILY'S ENTRYWAY?

PLEASE DON'T.

THEN, IN THE AGENCY OFFICE?!

WAAAAH! EDWARD! ANGELICA!

OKAY, I'M TAKING THESE AWAY FROM YOU.

YOU'VE ALREADY NAMED THEM?

SORRY. BUT ONE LOOK AT YOU AND I WAS DAZZLED.

ISOYA, YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING ON YOUR FACE.

OH, MY! ♡

MOM, DAD, THIS IS A RESTAURANT!

IT SEEMS LIKE THINGS ARE GOING WELL ON THEIR END.

ISN'T THIS HOTEL GREAT?

THE DINNERS ARE SUPER LUXURIOUS.

JUST TRY NOT TO GO OVERBOARD, ALL RIGHT?

YEAH! AND YOU CAN DRINK WHILE LOOKING OUT OVER THE OCEAN.

IN THAT CASE, MIROKU IS ALREADY OFF THE BOAT AND SINKING TO THE OCEAN FLOOR.

IFO DAAAAZE

MIROKU?!

I'LL GO GET SOME WATER!

HE WAS REALLY POUNDING THEM BACK TONIGHT.

IF YOU NOTICED, WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP HIM?!

IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

OH, UM...

I HOPE YOU'RE ENJOYING THE FOOD.

ERRM...

OUR RESTAURANT IS PROUD OF ITS SEAFOOD!

FEEL FREE TO PLACE EXTRA ORDERS AT ANY TIME!

?

UM, I'M SORRY. I'D LIKE SOME WATER...?

HEY MISTER, ARE YOU HITTING ON HER?

TOO BAD. YOU CAN'T HAVE HER!

?

WOULD YOU STOP SHOOING AWAY EVERYONE WHO SO MUCH AS TALKS TO FUMI?

GRRR...

UNDERSTOOD.

COULD WE GET SOME MINERAL WATER?

I PICKED SOME UP AT THE SPA.

SHIJU, YOU CAN SPEAK INDONESIAN?

HMM? OH.

I FEEL LIKE YOU'RE GETTING THE WRONG IDEA?!

...HMPH.

HE JUST LEFT TO GET SOME FRESH AIR...

MIROKU?

DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME, NINA!

SNUB

HA HA. SHE HAS GOOD REASON TO BE SUSPICIOUS.

RIGHT, MIROKU?

WITH FUMI.

ピタッ

FREEZE

SPLASH

SPLASH

I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SEEN YOU ACT THAT DRUNK BEFORE.

URK...

SORRY ABOUT EARLIER, FUMI.

IT'S FINE!

THIS IS EMBAR-RASSING.

HEE HEE. ARE YOU FEELING A LITTLE MORE SOBER NOW?

YEAH, THANKS.

I GUESS I GOT CAUGHT UP IN THE ISLAND'S ATMOSPHERE.

MY SISTERS WILL PROBABLY YELL AT ME LATER.

THEY CAN YELL AT US TOGETHER, THEN.

YES!

I HAD A GREAT TIME!

DID YOU ENJOY THE TRIP, FUMI?

I KNOW THAT'S JUST HOW IT GOES ON WORK TRIPS BUT...

ANYWAY, IT'S A SHAME THAT WE COULDN'T SIGHTSEE MORE.

THE PHOTO SHOOT WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH!

THE CAMERAMAN PRAISED YOU ALL A LOT.

I WAS REALLY IMPRESSED!

IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOUR HELP, FUMI.

OH, NOT AT ALL!

LET'S COME AGAIN SOME DAY!

THEN...

THAT'S TRUE, BUT...

RIGHT! UM...

?

MIROKU?

"MIYOSHI'S TROPICAL TOUR"! THAT SOUNDS SO EXCITING!

HEE HEE, THAT SOUNDS GREAT!

I WANT IT TO BE JUST YOU...

AND ME.

THE NEXT TIME WE COME...

...

WOULD THAT BE OKAY?

I'D LIKE THAT.

Y–

YEAH.

BA-DUMP

UHHH...

UM...

THE OCEAN IS BEAUTIFUL AT NIGHT.

BA-DUMP

FUMI...

YOU CAN SEE THE STARS WELL TOO.

AS EXPECTED OF A SOUTHERN ISLAND.

HUH?!

HOLD STILL FOR A SECOND.

BA-DUMP

REACH

AH...

BA-DUMP

SQUEEZE ギュッ

OKAY.

IT LOOKS GREAT ON YOU.

...HUH?

AH, THIS IS...

YOU WERE LOOKING AT IT EARLIER, RIGHT?

I GOT IT AS A PRESENT TO REMEMBER OUR TRIP BY.

THINK OF IT AS A THANKS FROM ME! YOU ALWAYS SAVE MY BUTT.

BUT IT WAS SO EXPENSIVE!

THAT'S NOT IT. I'M REALLY HAPPY ABOUT THE PRESENT.

IT'S JUST...

?

WHAT'S WRONG?

...

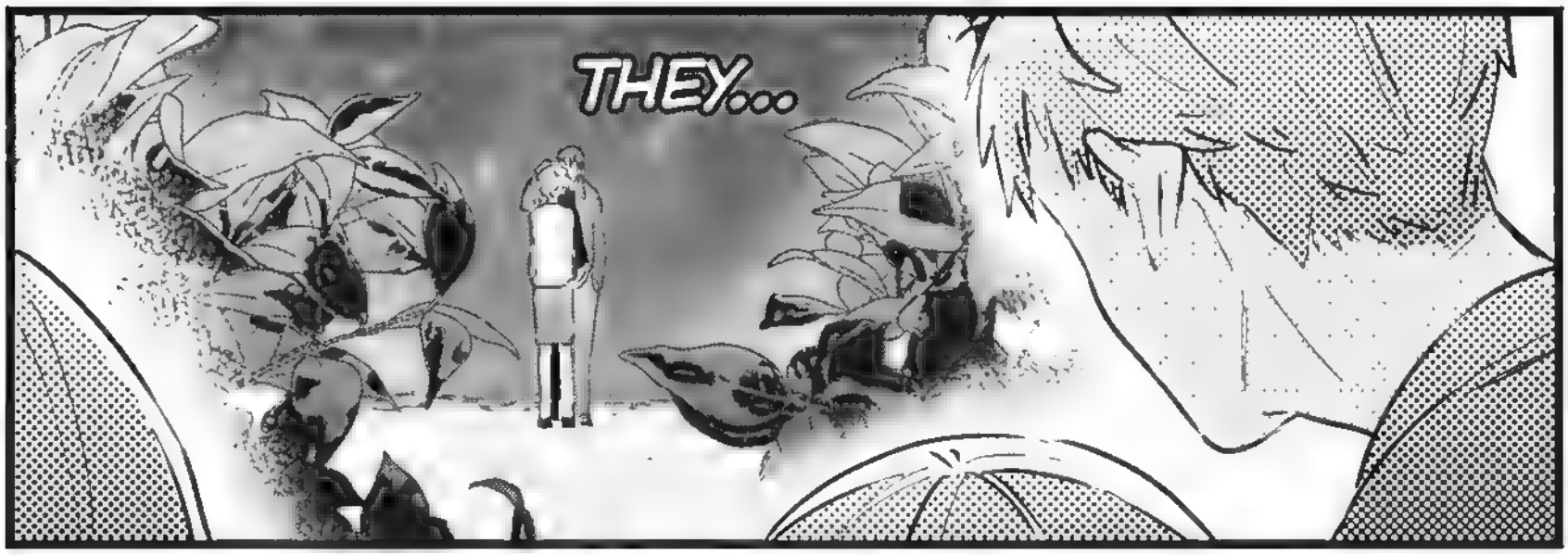
DO YOU NOT LIKE IT?

I MISUNDER-STOOD AND THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO KISS ME.

FUMI.

SORRY.

I KNOW IT'S NOT MUCH, BUT PLEASE FORGIVE ME WITH THIS.


THEY...

THEY'RE ACTING LIKE LOVESTRUCK TEENAGERS!

RIGHT, MIHACHI?

THEY'VE GOT NOTHING ON US, THOUGH.

I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW MOONY MIROKU IS ACTING.

WHY AREN'T THEY DATING?!

MIHACHI...

I GUESS THOSE TWO HAVE THEIR OWN ROMANTIC DRAMA GOING ON TOO.

EVERYONE'S HIGH OFF THE THRILL OF BEING IN THE TROPICS.

SHE AND MIROKU ARE SO EMBARRASSING.

ぷくー

POUT

HMM?

...ARE YOU NOT?

ARE YOU NOT...

...GOING TO DO THAT SORT OF THING TOO, SHIJU?

SHIJU?

FWAP

TIME OUT.

DAMN IT!

SHE'S SOOOOO CUTE.

UH...

HUH?

DO YOU LIKE THAT SORT OF STUFF, NINA?

WELL, THAT'S...

I GUESS...

A LITTLE...!

LEAN

I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, WHENEVER YOU WANT.

I...

SHOCK

YOU'RE SO MEAN!

FWIP

I HATE HOW IT SOUNDS LIKE THAT'S A LINE YOU'RE USED TO SAYING!

To be continued...

The Easygoing Everyday Life of an Unemployed, Forty-Something Beast

Original Short Story

by Mochiko Mochida

I hadn't wanted to be a host to begin with, but my string of unapproved absences had gotten me fired. In the few days since I'd become gloriously unemployed, I'd spent all my time sleeping and eating, but I'd finally gotten bored. And fat.

That was only natural. I'd just been stuffing my face and napping without leaving home, much less working.

"What should I do? I won't run out of money anytime soon, so I don't really want to work…" I lived alone in a tiny studio apartment, didn't gamble, and didn't have any hobbies to spend money on, so I wasn't exactly poor. Still, I'd have to go back to work eventually. "Argh, I really don't want to…"

I started talking to myself more once I entered my forties. It was the afternoon, and I didn't think anyone else was home, much less listening to me if they were, so I didn't bother to keep quiet.

But even I had dreams when I was younger.

Back then, I had been able to recklessly chase after my dreams without having to worry about money. I missed the days when I danced with my friends, soaked up the limelight, and was wrapped in applause when I pulled off an amazing move.

"Upsy-daisy." I staggered a little and tsked when I used my stomach muscles to stand up from my futon, which I kept laid

out. Once, I'd had a fairly chiseled body, but the pounds I'd packed on since quitting my job as a host were hindering my movements.

That's right. Dancing was supposed to have been my youthful dream… but I'd kept it up. When I was a host, and for the short time I worked at a company before that, I never stopped dancing. I wanted to express myself through my dances. I wanted the people around me to acknowledge me.

"I guess they call it a dream 'cause it's something that'll never come true." I did a few stretches since I was already up, and my stomach fat definitely bothered me.

Remembering that I was out of cigarettes, I walked to the convenience store without bothering to change out of my sweats. After buying cigarettes and coffee, I decided to go to the gym for the first time in a long while. But just because I was already wearing sweats. Definitely not because I was shocked by the reflection of myself in the shop's glass. Definitely not.

I'm not naive, so I knew how others viewed me. With my bronze skin, untrimmed beard, and long hair pulled back in a ponytail, it was obvious that I wasn't employed in a "proper" job.

Still, a single look from me was enough to make women blush. I don't know if I had the smell of someone who worked in the nightclub district, but a lot of women approached me just to have fun. Not that I could focus on having fun when I was unemployed.

I only had a tank top on under my sweatshirt, but there weren't

many people at the gym and no one seemed to be paying any attention to me. Right after stripping off my sweatshirt, I felt someone pinch the fat around my stomach.

"Whoa! What the…? Oh, it's just you, ossan."

"I've said this many times before, but I'm only a year older than you."

"Yeah, yeah." Yoichi and I had the same conversation every time we saw each other. It was basically how we greeted each other. We went way back, and I'd been surprised when we'd reunited at the gym. In the past, he had been a skinny idol right in the sweet spot between being a boy and a young man, but time hadn't treated him well. Not that it had treated me much better.

"Long time no see. How've you been lately?"

"Unemployed."

"Huh?! Are you okay?"

"I've got money, so I'll just take my time looking for a pencil-pushing job or something."

"I wonder if any companies will be willing to hire a beast like you…"

"Huh? I have experience, so I'll be fine."

"You have experience?! No way!"

"Shut up!" I used both hands to give that rude ossan a noogie, but I was frustrated by how my attack barely made him budge.

Yoichi was way more muscular than he'd been before. It made me wonder just what his goal was.

I grinned wryly as I caught myself thinking about how his dance moves would be cleaner if he were a little leaner. It was depressing that even after all these years, dance was the last thing I thought of at night and the first thing that popped into my head in the morning. Like, really depressing.

"What a mess…"

"What happened?" Yoichi asked.

"I'm just wondering what an unemployed beast like me should do."

"You wanna… go back to the forest or something?"

"No thanks. I'm sensitive, so I can't handle places with lots of bugs. Or anywhere that doesn't have a convenience store within a five-minute walk."

"A beast is still a beast, even if you take the wild out of him."

"Yeah, yeah. Whatever."

As we faced the mirrors and chatted mindlessly while working out, I started to sense the hot gazes of women a ways away from us.

Despite his looks, Yoichi was a CEO. I commented how he must not lack interested parties, but Yoichi replied, "What are you talking about?"

"I think you've gotten even sexier than you were before. But not as hot as someone else I know."

"Who? A model for an agency or something? I bet he's more suited to being a host than a model."

"Ha ha ha! You have a point. That might suit him more, in some ways." I was trying to say that guys who simply ooze sex appeal are no good, but then I realized that the ossan surprisingly liked guys like that.

And his expression while we were talking…

"Hmm? What is it?"

"I was just thinking that you really look like an ossan, Ossan. Kind of like a dad."

"Huh?"

Crap. I didn't mean to say that.

That ossan Yoichi subjugated me by pinching my stomach fat in retaliation. By the time he finished with me, I'd never pass for a blushing bride... But I'll leave the details up to your imagination.

I'LL GET MY PASS-PORT RIGHT AWAY.
GRIN
YOU'RE SO SIMPLE-MINDED!

HUH?!

YOU'RE SUCH A HARD WORKER.

GOODNESS, FUMI.

NO, IT'S NOT AT ALL!

I'M SURE CARING FOR MIROKU ALL THE TIME IS A STRUGGLE.

YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY, SO YOU SHOULD RELAX A LITTLE.

EVEN THOUGH HE HAD HARDLY ANY TIME TO REST DURING THE PHOTO SHOOT...

MIROKU WAS SO CONSIDERATE OF EVERYONE!

FLUSTER おた

FLUSTER おた

HE REALLY LIVENS THINGS UP!

AND EVEN THOUGH THIS IS HIS FIRST TIME OVERSEAS, HE'S GOTTEN SO CLOSE WITH THE PEOPLE AND ANIMALS HERE!

I'LL GET IT FOR YOU!

MIROKU, WHAT WILL YOU HAVE TO EAT NEXT?

RUSH

RUSH

THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO CREATE AS MANY CHANCES FOR HIM AND THE OTHERS TO REST AS I CAN!

SO, UM, HONESTLY, I'M THE ONE WHO'S GRATEFUL FOR HIM!

SHE LOOKS LIKE A LITTLE HAMSTER...!

EVERYONE IN THE OSAKI FAMILY FEELS THE SAME WAY.

THE NEXT VOLUME IS THE LAST IN THE SERIES!

MIROKU LOSES HIS VOICE RIGHT BEFORE THEIR CONCERT AT THE SITE OF ALL SITES, THE BUDOKAN?!

AFTER MEETING THOSE OSSANS, I LEARNED...

IN THE NEXT VOLUME...

MUST-SEE!

A COMICALIZATION OF MOCHIKO MOCHIDA'S ORIGINAL STORY!

OSSAN IDOL VOLUME 8 WILL BE GOING ON SALE AS EARLY AS THIS SUMMER!

PC Fiore

USUALLY COMES LAST!
THAT THE HARDEST OPPONENT...
RUUUUMBLE
ゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴ

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~ TOKYOPOP

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STOP

THIS IS THE BACK OF THE BOOK!

How do you read manga-style? It's simple! Let's practice -- just start in the top right panel and follow the numbers below!

Crimson from ***Kamo*** / Fairy Cat from ***Grimms Manga Tales***
Morrey from ***Goldfisch*** / Princess Ai from ***Princess Ai***